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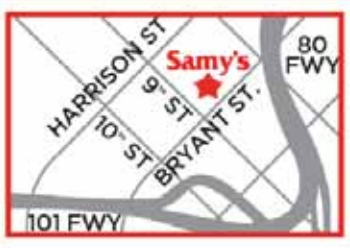

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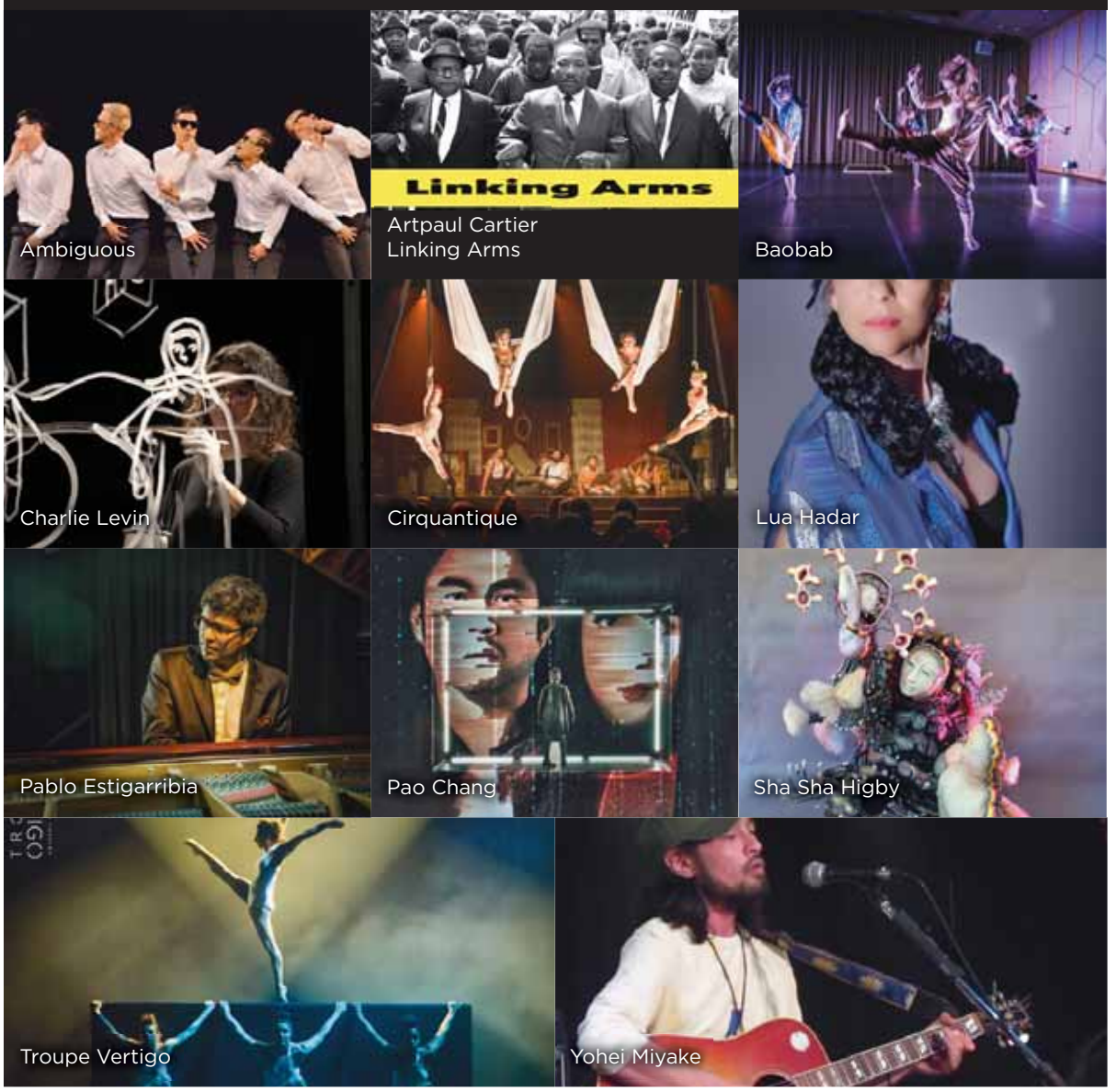

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The Alamo Drafthouse Cinema New Mission.

Photo by Kevin Hume

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From filmmaker Mark Kitchell (Berkeley in the Sixties, A fierce Green Fire) comes a new saga of social change, EVOLUTION of ORGANIC, the story of the organic agriculture movement, told by those who built it. Narrated by Frances McDormand.

A panel discussion featuring the filmmaker and organic food experts will follow the screening.

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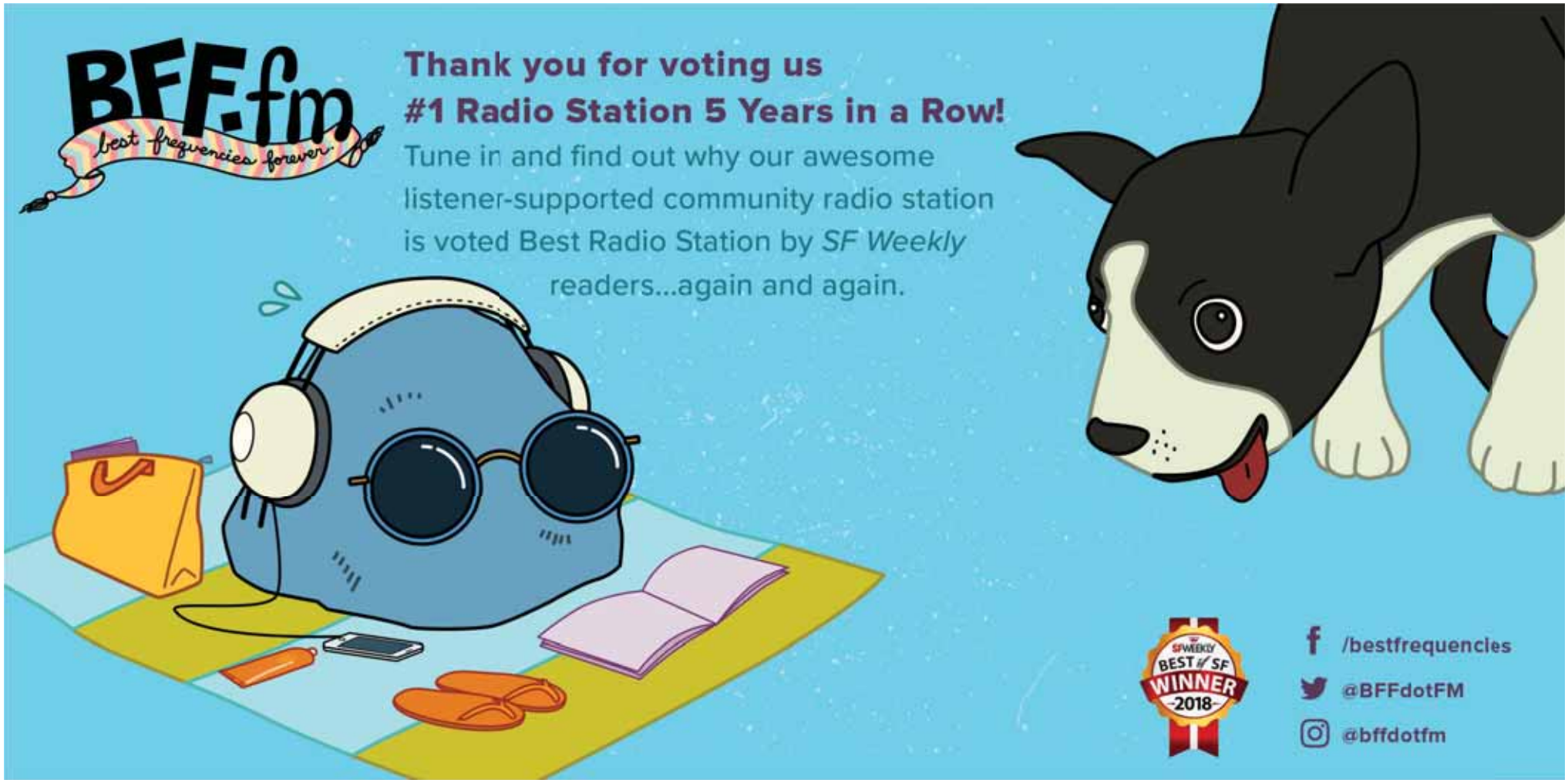

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MOST PRACTICAL USE OF THE MISSION'S COLLECTIVE OUTRAGE

STOPPING OR AT LEAST POSTPONING YASS

The Beast on Bryant and the Monster in the Mission are set to shift the neighborhood's character ever whiter and wealthier when those new developments open. But perhaps nothing chucked a javelin at the Mission's sense of outrage quite like the news that vulture capitalist and Gawker destroyer Peter Thiel's company was backing a new members-only social club for gay men called Yass. It's supposed to open in the former Farina on 18th Street sometime later this year, but then again maybe not, because few things have inspired progressive San Francisco to rise up as one against this exclusive gentrification accelerant with the tired name. Have we stopped it outright? Caused them to pivot until they escape the Earth's gravity? We don't know, but we stand ready to make fun of it until the heat death of the universe if need be.

BEST HOME FOR SEX POSITIVITY

O.SCHOOL

The internet has been a bone to people with unusual fetishes, allowing them to connect in ways that would have been much harder decades ago. But beyond being rife with misinformation and revenge porn, it's also famously censorious. Instagram won't let you post an exposed nipple without a passive-aggressive letter. Countering the puritanism and contradictory information is O.School, Andrea Barrica's startup dedicated to streaming short broadcasts by sexologists on various sexual topics. "You can't talk about anything on the internet — let alone if you're queer or a woman," she told *SF Weekly* at last fall's pre-launch, but with clips like "F*** Yes to Please" and "How Do I Keep My Sex Toys Clean?" O.School is banishing shame and foregrounding pleasure.

BEST STREET PHOTOGRAPHER

DARWIN BELL

A decades-long San Francisco resident who's made the Tenderloin his home the last few years, Darwin Bell excels at finding the precise angle by which otherwise mundane streetscapes become little treatises on contemporary life in the city. A fixture of *SFist* before that aggregator's untimely demise last fall, his latest show at the Tenderloin Museum showed that frequently misunderstood neighborhood in positive ways — but without ever being mawkish. Diane Arbus was accused of being cold toward her subjects (and she worked in black-and-white besides). Bell humanizes his.

BEST NEW COOKING SCHOOL

THE CIVIC KITCHEN
2961 Mission St., thecivickitchen.com

Let's say you're throwing a dinner party and feeling a little ambitious, only to realize you're courting disaster have absolutely no idea what you're doing since you've eaten nothing but UberEats for three years. The Civic Kitchen founders Sasha Crehan and Jen Nurse have built out a huge workspace in the Mission that's not only a great place to learn what and you don't know what "fold" means in a culinary context, but where you can actually figure out how to make lemon custard three ways — and then eat a lovely meal with your fellow students once you've mastered your new skills.

BEST REIMAGINING OF S.F. HISTORY

THE TENDERLOIN MUSEUM'S
Compton's Cafeteria Riot

When a trans woman lobbed a cup of coffee in an SFPD officer's face in August 1966, it helped set in motion a chain of events that brought us to the present moment and the cusp of true LGBTQ equality. But for decades, the Compton's Cafeteria Riot languished in the shadow of New York's Stonewall uprising, three years later. To give the neighborhood's place in U.S. history its due, the Tenderloin Museum worked with Collette LeGrande, Mark Nassar, Donna Personna, and director AeJay Mitchell on an interactive theater piece that placed patrons in a re-created diner that fateful evening. *The Compton's Cafeteria Riot*, at New Village Cafe, corrected the historical record while pushing the Bay Area's trans and gender-nonconforming POC populations to the artistic forefront. Excellent work.

BEST ARTISTIC CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM

"ISAAC JULIEN: PLAYTIME"

The Fort Mason Center for Arts and Culture has slowly reinvented itself from a venue for weddings and giant sales of surplus library books to a place where those wonderful things still happen all the time, only they're now surrounded by world-class art installations. When FMCAC showed the British artist and filmmaker Isaac Julien's suite of multi-screen works, "Playtime," it maximize the site's potential while offering a pointed critique of globalized capital by following people from different walks of life in starkly different places: China, Dubai, and Iceland. Marxist philosopher David Harvey famously said we can more easily imagine the end of life on Earth than the end of capitalism, but after Playtime, that chilling formulation no longer holds.

Black Bird Bookstore

Photo by Mira Laing

BEST COOKBOOK WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY LOCALS

Salt Fat Acid Heat

Everyone with a phone is a photographer, and cookbooks have been enjoying a resurgence for years, but our favorite cookbook of the last year contains zero photos. Samin Nosrat's *Salt Fat Acid Heat* breaks the alchemy of cooking down into its four most basic components — the air, fire, water, and earth of gastronomy — in ways that demystify the Maillard reaction and the art of fermentation. Better yet, it's illustrated by prolific San Francisco designer Wendy MacNaughton, whose endearing linework and charmingly intellectual jokiness simultaneously give the work humor and heft. Nosrat is an educator and chef who's worked with Michael Pollan and Alice Waters — and not for nothing did this culinary tome win a James Beard Award earlier this year.

BEST NEW INDIE BOOKSTORE

BLACK BIRD BOOKS
4033 Judah St., blackbirdbooksf.com

A fundraising campaign to bring a bookstore to the Bronx went viral last year after readers in that New York borough of 1.4 million people grew frustrated with the total lack of a general-interest shop. The Outer Sunset didn't have quite such a groundswell of literary angst, but when Black Bird Bookstore opened up last year, it was because former NYC bookstore owner Kathryn Grantham was determined to buck the nationwide trend of closures. With its large selection of children's books — they're immune to the e-book phenomenon, Grantham says — it's not a musty emporium of slowly yellowing trade paperbacks, but a curated gift shop amid Judah Street's surfwear purveyors.

BEST NEW LOCAL BAND THAT WILL RESTORE YOUR FAITH IN ROCK MUSIC

PARDONER
pardoner.bandcamp.com

Do not let the Billboard charts fool you. There are still exciting, young bands out there who are igniting creative energy into guitar-heavy music, and local post-punk group Pardoner are an exemplary group who fit this bill. Taking notes from '90s indie legends like Pavement and Dinosaur Jr., the quartet is comprised of guitarists and vocalists Max Freeland and Trey Flanigan, along with bassist Will Mervau and drummer River van den Berghe. Well known in the Bay Area rock scene for their chaotic live shows, along with the critical-acclaim for their riotous debut album *Uncontrollable Salvation*, released last September, we may not have to look further than our own backyard for the next big rock band. .

BEST COMMUNITY RADIO SHOW

ROLL OVER EASY,BFF.FM
bff/fm/shows/roll-over-easy

It's easy to get swept up in the negative, complaint-driven narrative of S.F. The streets are dirty, Muni is unreliable, politicians are corrupt, the homelessness crisis is spinning out of control. But on Thursday mornings there's an opportunity to take a break from all that, with the ever-optimistic Roll Over Easy, a two-hour talk radio show whose every episode feels like a love letter to San Francisco. From 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., BFF.fm hosts Sequoia and Early Bird take you from "under the covers to after coffee" — as their slogan says — with morning weather reports, fictional helicopter rides, the news, adventure suggestions, and a local guest. There's no better way to start your morning.

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BEST STANDUP COMEDY JOINT

THE SET UP
222 Hyde St. setupcomedy.com

You'd be hard-pressed to find any comedy basement in the city that more closely resembles the classic, brick-lined institutions across New York. The Set Up at 222 Hyde St. has suffered through several changes as the street-facing bar has changed ownership a few times, but this version may be the best yet. The lineup of comedians is diverse (be it tech worker from a small town in the Midwest to a dishwasher from the Mission) the routines are genuinely laugh-out-loud funny, and the venue is small enough to make the vibe intimate. Plus, Ales Unlimited up front has a surprisingly awesome tap list, with Henhouse, Sante Adairius, Cascade, and more. If you miss the vibe of the old, shuttered Dark Room on Mission, the Set Up will fill that void.

BEST VENTURE SAVING SF THEATER

THE CURRAN
445 Geary Street, sfcurran.com

Since it was announced three years ago that longtime Broadway producer and local arts patron Carole Shorenstein Hays was breaking up with the touring-production outfit she helped found (SHN) and bankrolling a multi-million-dollar renovation of the 96-year-old Curran, it's been clear that the local theater scene had scored a big win. The refurbished theater is gorgeous, and fans of quirky musical theater and envelope-pushing drama have been increasingly thrilled with each successive show announcement — the Curran's offerings have been the most critically acclaimed and intellectually rich local productions of the past two seasons with only the exception of Hamilton. Beginning with *Fun Home* early last year, and with subsequent productions of the Tony-winning play Eclipsed, the Tony-nominated bluegrass musical Bright Star, and the blow-me-down brilliant *24-Decade History of Popular Music* by Taylor Mac, the Curran has staked a major claim as SF's home for large-scale, Broadway caliber fare that doesn't fall into the "commercial" category that has long shaped SHN's seasons. Now this season, with the arrival of a new holiday show by Taylor Mac, and the first touring production of the Tony-winning *Dear Evan Hansen*, theater geeks are already over the moon. And with the delightful, just-closed pre-Broadway tryout of *Head Over Heels* (a jukebox musical of Go-Go's tunes framed by a 16th-century prose fable), the Curran joins Berkeley Rep in staging Broadway-ready work for the Bay Area's early stamp of approval. Brava, Ms. Hays. Brava.

BEST REASON TO GET OFF YOUTUBE

WEIRD WEDNESDAYS AT ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE
2550 Mission Street, drafthouse.com/sf

It's shocking that in a city as full of nerds and film geeks as SF it's taken so long to get a major movie venue devoted to screening the more bizarre relics of B-movie history on the regular — the kinds of movies that never made it to VHS let alone DVD and will never, ever be found streaming on Netflix. Thankfully, we now have Austin-born Alamo Drafthouse and their tradition of Weird Wednesdays, in which they devote one of their smaller screens, usually after 9 p.m. on Hump Day, to showing exploitation films in 35mm mostly from the 1960s, '70s, and '80s, ranging from the kooky to the mind-blowingly insane — all with the pleasant bonus of Negronis and pizza delivered to your seat. Recent picks have included *Joysticks*, a 1983 teensploitation comedy about a conservative town freaking out about the rising popularity of arcades; the roller-skating acid-trip musical *Xanadu* from 1980; and 1979's TiLT, starring a 13-year-old Brooke Shields as a pinball prodigy.

SCRAPPIEST SF THEATER COMPANY

SAN FRANCISCO PLAYHOUSE
450 Post Street, sfplayhouse.org

As a rule, small theater companies don't tackle full-scale musicals, full stop. Most theater pros know that without the budgets and talent magnets of at least a larger regional theater, the results can feel like rag-tag community theater at best, or a high school production at worst. But some small companies manage to pull off the feat with astonishing ease, making do without elaborate sets or large houses, and attracting talented performers who hold the shows together. San Francisco Playhouse, housed in a former ballroom on the second floor of the Elks Club near Union Square, is one of those companies — and they describe their mission as being an "empathy gym" in which theatergoers come to "practice our powers of compassion." Recent ambitious undertakings have included *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Into the Woods*, *Company,* and the musically complex *Promises, Promises*, and their productions of new and vintage plays have been similarly impressive, including this season's *Born Yesterday*. The upcoming season includes a revival of *Mary Poppins* (will they actually have a fly rig?), the world premiere of Christopher Chen's *You Mean to Do Me Harm*, and *Cabaret*. I can all but guarantee that one or all of these will be far better than you'd expect from a company of this size, and this low profile.

BEST MOVIE THEATER TO USE MOVIEPASS ON

ALAMO DRAFTHOUSE CINEMA - NEW MISSION
2550 Mission St., drafthouse.com/sf

When MoviePass lowered its monthly price to $9.99 in September, it benefited residents of expensive cities like San Francisco. Ticket prices at one of the most expensive theaters, Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, range from $11 to $15.75 before online booking fees and 3D surcharges. But MoviePass miraculously includes the theater, which encourages users to be served concessions like drinks and popcorn they now feel they can afford. Plus, the theater often shows movies with a limited release like *The Florida Project* and *Call Me By Your Name*. But because MoviePass users can't reserve ahead of time, the theater's limited seats mean arriving early is the only way to ensure you don't end up a few feet from the screen, if you get in at all.

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KQED'S BAY CURIOUS
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KQED has a lot of podcasts worth a listen but none are more light, informative, and fun as *Bay Curious*. Not only does it have a clever name, it answers listener questions on subjects big and small. Bay Area residents have learned so much about San Francisco's cisterns, how 420 definitely started in San Rafael, and if the Castro is "getting less gay" and more — all in short episodes up to 15 minutes. The podcast launched days before the 2016 election would send the Bay Area into a political mourning, which makes host Olivia Allen-Price's sense of normalcy a needed break in between the torrent of disturbing news spurred by a norm-shattering administration.

BEST BACK-FROM-THE-DEAD MUSEUM

CARTOON ART MUSEUM
781 Beach St., cartoonart.org

There's nothing comical about the recurring tragedy of Bay Area artists and art spaces being evicted amid gigantic rent increases. But one storied comic art shrine got the last laugh on tech-boom displacement, as the Cartoon Art Museum proved the old adage that "No one stays dead in the comics." After a two-year exile when the rent was doubled at their old Yerba Buena Gardens location, the museum was gloriously resurrected last October at a new Fisherman's Wharf location. The new and improved Cartoon Art Museum still has its thousands of goosebump-inducing original works by *Peanuts*' Charles Schulz and *Calvin and Hobbes*' Bill Watterson, an *Infinity War* exhibit up all summer long featuring Marvel movie costumes and props, and the first Tuesday of every month still operates as a pay-what-you-wish day.

BEST STRIPEY-TIGHTED TRICKSTER TROUPE

FOU FOU HA
foufouha.net

The "sexy clown" thing has been done to death, but no one can hold a clown nose to Fou Fou Ha's gargantuan technicolor wigs, masterful choreography, and cavalcade of candy-striped tights, lingerie, and humongously high heels. Fou Fou Ha continues their 17 years of bombastic variety show mischief this summer with a "Menagerie of Fools" residency at the Circus Center and more of their signature acrobatics, show-stopping musical numbers, and cartoonish cake make-up stylings. The Fous have dispatched their gender-bending satirical shows out to other cities, with a New York offshoot called "Fou York," and new branches in Portland and Austin. And fans can support their just-launched Patreon campaign to ensure Fou Fou Ha always has the last laugh.

BEST POST-OKCUPID WAY TO GET SOME ACTION

KINKY SPEED DATING
kinkyspeeddating.com

Those who dumped OKCupid when the dating site started demanding quote-unquote real names can now take their swiping-right pursuits into real life and meet interested parties face-to-face. Kinky Speed Dating with Psychokitty is a live, human, in-person event for finding delectable new kinky people — a lot of them, in a short amount of time — with a variety of insatiable sexual appetites. Generally held at SoMa leather space The Citadel (where the next one is June 21), Kinky Speed Dating also pops up at SF Catalyst, and they'll be at the Mendocino County leather weekend getaway Boundless. Kinky Speed Dating is a great way to find magnificent people whose kinks play well with yours, and best of all, it never asks for your "real" name.

THANK YOU!

SF WEEKLY READERS

MADRONE ART BAR

500 Divisadero / madroneartbar.com

Best Singles Bar
Best Dance Party: FRINGE!

POPS BAR

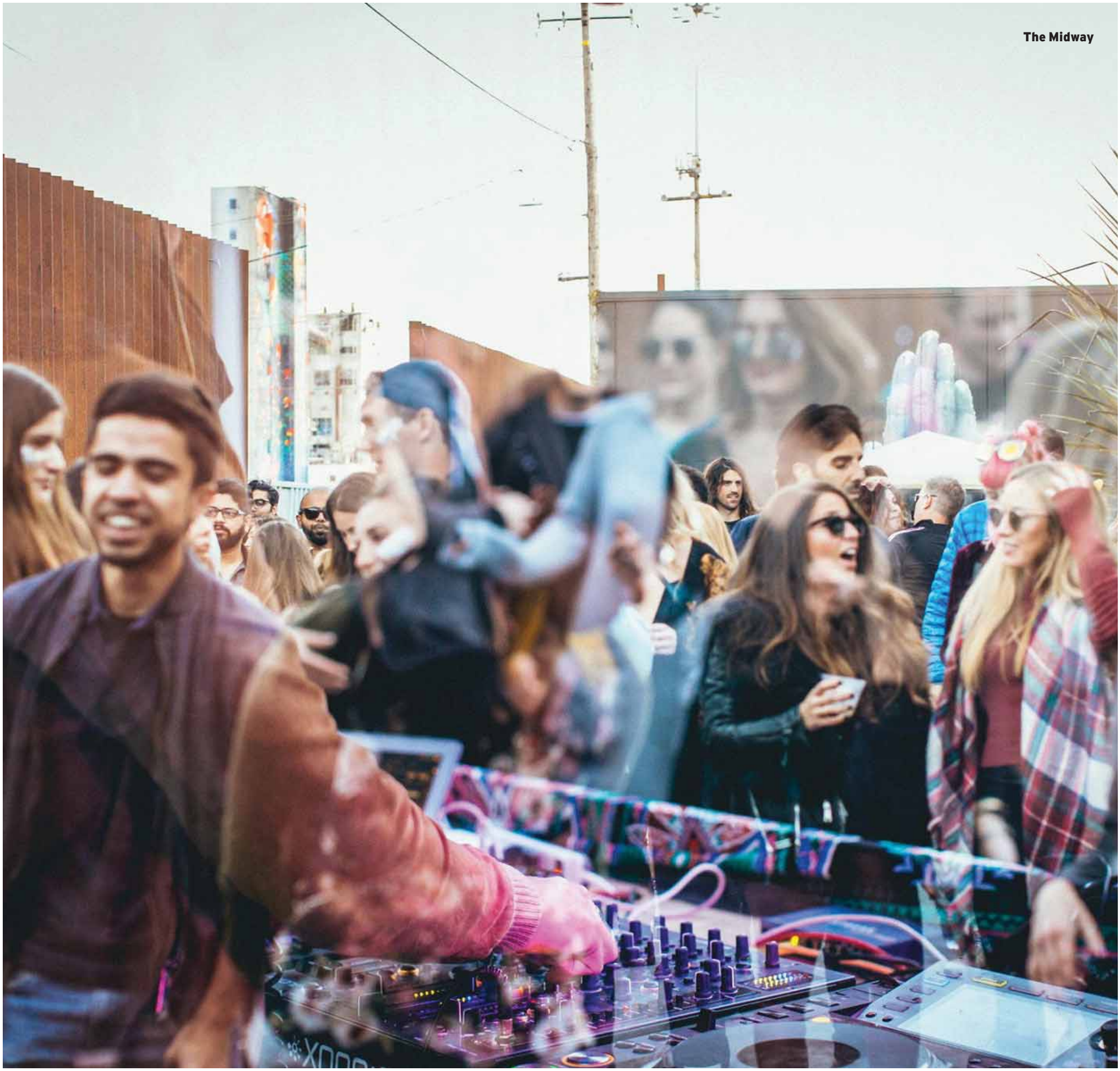
2800 24th Street / popssf.com

Best Bloody Mary
Best Cocktail
Best Quiz Night

BAR FLUXUS

18 Harlan Place / barfluxus.com

Best New Bar



The Midway

NightLife as seen by: Bay Area artist Nigel Sussman

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7 Mile House

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Pop's Bar

COCKTAIL BAR
Noir Lounge

MARGARITA
Pacific Union Club

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NEW BAR
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SINGLES BAR
Madrone Art Bar

SPORTS BAR
7 Mile House

STRIP CLUB
Gold Club

TEQULIA BAR
Tommy's Mexican

WHISKEY BAR
Noir Lounge

WINE BAR
Scopo Divino

Best Weekly Dance Party That Makes You Look Forward To Wednesdays

HOUSEPITALITY
(F8 Nightclub) 1192 Folsom St. housepitalitysf.com

Ask any veteran partier in the city what their favorite night of the week is, and chances are they'll answer Wednesday because of Housepitality, the long-running weekly dance party held at F8. With a legion of top international and local house DJs always eager to spin, including resident DJs Victor Vega and Sharon Buck, a consistently cheap $10 cover, and an unpretentious atmosphere, Housepitality gives experienced clubbers everything they want in a strictly underground dance party, and more.

Best Small Gay Club Night

DUDES AND DISCO (D.A.D.)
Driftwood, 1225 Folsom Street, facebook.com/dudesanddisco

In an era of dwindling nightlife options for S.F. gays, 2017 brought along a cool new club night in a new (but old) SoMa venue, and one year in it's proven to draw a steady and loyal following of gay men in the 30-45 age bracket. Dudes and Disco (D.A.D.), a sort-of monthly dance party with the tiniest of dance floors at the generally straight cocktail bar Driftwood, is a fun alternative to similar parties that happen down the street at Powerhouse, with a less raunchy edge for those who mind such things. The bar, formerly a leather bar known by the names KoK and My Place, remains gay owned and transitions easily from lounge to small club, even though there's a small traffic juggernaut where the bar juts out and traffic is flowing to and from the DJ area in back. Disco mavens like DJs Carrie On Disco and Gay Marvine are regular guests here, along with resident DJs Kelly Naughton and Michael Romano, as host Leon Fox flounces through the crowd. Additions to the decor — like a spinning, bedazzled male mannequin torso lit from within by Christmas lights — turn the staid space into an underground gay lair, something akin to the little bars in New York's East Village that hosted parties like this in recent decades. It's a welcome, sexy addition to the roster of monthly shindigs we have to choose from, and the music is always amazing.

20 Spot

Best Mission Wine Bar

20 SPOT
3565 20th Street

Wine bars aren't as hip or novel as they seemed 10 or 15 years ago, and you don't see so many opening these days because, perhaps, San Franciscans like to take their dates out for something stiffer, if not for a full meal. But still going strong and doing so with great taste and personality after five years is 20 Spot, the cozy Mission wine and snack bar opened by local wine guy Bodhi Freedom. True to its home in the former Force of Habit record shop, LP records spin behind the bar, and there's a welcoming, no-bullshit attitude about the place that encourages second and third glasses. The menu tends toward likable and quirky oddities from around the globe, the deviled eggs are fantastic, and the atmosphere is more like a friend's living room than a stuffy tasting room. It's a great spot for a first or second date, or an after-dinner Nebbiolo, and it's equally pleasant during daylight hours as a pitstop during your Mission wanderings.

Best Place to Keep Dancing After Sunrise

HALCYON
314 11th Street

It can feel, at times, like San Francisco's parents came home and shut down the real party years ago, and all we're left with are dull, chaperoned affairs where no one dares spike the punch because they're all honor-roll students who can't hold their booze. That's not the case at Halcyon, the late 2016 revamping of the space formerly known as Beatbox and Siberia on the club strip of 11th Street. Having been granted a rare 24-hour operating license, owner Gina Milano (Le Club) has been booking parties that push on well past last call into the morning hours, Ibiza/Berlin-style — and in California, this means that the bar reopens at 6 a.m. The place is also one of the only spots in town

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to catch the big international house DJs who you might find this summer in Ibiza or Mykonos, on a soundsystem befitting their talents, with a whole new lighting rig to boot. Maybe, just maybe, someday, they'll be able to stop the silly Puritan charade of sweeping away the drinks at 1:45 and just let everyone party on through — but obviously most of the party people who are still standing past 2 a.m. are high on other things, so maybe it doesn't matter either way.

Raddest Hotel Lobby Bar

VILLON
1100 Market Street

You're going to suffer some line-standing and some whiffs of faux-L.A. exclusivity to get into Charmaine's, the rooftop bar at the new Proper Hotel. But for a sophisticated drink in an equally well-designed, indoor space, just head to the street-level lobby bar and restaurant, Villon, which includes several lounge tables with couch seating in the lobby itself. Designer Kelly Wearstler has brought San Francisco a cool, retro, Parisian salon of a space, covered in art, which feels entirely apart from the still chaotic mid-Market environs just outside the frosted windows — and even though the bar backs up to the Market Street side, you'll need to enter on McAllister. The drink menu, created by the Bon Vivants of Trick Dog fame, is extensive and self-consciously quirky, attempting to represent San Francisco with seven sections of seven cocktails each, including things like the Earthquake Proof (tequila, creme de cacao, lime, and Coke, $14) and the Lincoln Highway (apple brandy, Ancho Reyes liqueur, absinthe, cinnamon, lemon, $14).

Best Bearded Drag Show

DICK AT NIGHT AT MOBY DICK
Wednesdays, 10 p.m., 4049 18th St., instagram.com/mobydickbarsf

The Stud continues the grand tradition of weirdo performance-art drag that began with Trannyshack in days of yore with the monthly Vivvy's Grand Opening. But back in the Castro, Grace Towers and her mostly bearded Haus of Towers push the limits and question the meaning of drag every week, calling to mind the (often messy) glory of the Cockettes and the long lineage of facial hair paired with glitter and false eyelashes. For her birthday and at other times throughout the year, Ms. Towers pays homage to her Latinx heritage with Latin music lip syncs, and about once a month, the Wednesday show is devoted entirely to spoken word performances, which makes it all the more odd — to the delight of many a hip and intellectual young queer. Also, in a nod to the drag shows of yesteryear that took place in bars this small, most of the queens do a sashay or three into the crowd to collect dollar bills, because, as you may have heard, even drag this cheap isn't *that* cheap.

Best New Excuse to Have Fondue with Cocktails

THE BEEHIVE
842 Valencia Street, thebeehivesf.com

The *Mad Men*-inspired wave of retro bars continues long past the run of the show, and now the Mission has one more such drinking den — albeit with a mostly modern drink menu. Drawing on the success of his Dogpatch cocktail co-venture Third Rail and his downtown co-venture The Treasury, former Range chef-owner Phil West has transformed the Range space on Valencia into a groovy throwback lounge called The Beehive, with the help of Treasury collaborators Arnold Eric Wong and Steve Werney. The snacks lean heavily toward the mid-century, with deviled eggs, Swedish meatballs, and house-made "Spam" rillette, and you could arguably make a meal of it if you order the largest offering: cheese fondue that comes in two varieties, and in small and large formats, serving two or four people respectively. It seems like fondue had a trendy moment more than a decade ago, but it's the kind of fun, social food that never really goes out of style, and goes great with drinks like the Centerfold (Pommeau de Normandie, Krogstad Aquavit, lemon, raspberry, and sparkling wine) — a riff on Marilyn Monroe's favorite drink, which was Champagne with apple brandy and grenadine.

Best New Mayoral-Themed Cocktail Menu

FINN TOWN
2251 Market St., finntownsf.com

The Castro gained a classy new dining and drinking option last year with the opening of Finn Town, and in the cocktail department they've kept things cheeky from the start with signature drinks inspired by local legends like Harvey Milk (the Milkman, which is served in a glass milk carton, $14) and Sharon Stone (the Not So Basic Instinct, made with rye, grapefruit, and clove, $14). This election season, they're featuring a menu inspired by "once and future" mayors, with $12 drinks like the Moscone Mule (basically a Moscow Mule), the Marky Mark for mayoral hopeful Mark Leno (tequila, mezcal, Luxardo maraschino, and lime), and the Gavinator (a non-alcoholic blend of citrus juice, grenadine, and soda). There are drinks also in honor of candidates London Breed, Jane Kim, and Angela Alioto, as well as former mayor Willie Brown. But, interestingly, the late Ed Lee gets no love here.

Best space for Block Parties

THE MIDWAY
900 Marin St., themidwaysf.com

San Francisco's blockbuster block party is the Space Cowboys' annual Breakfast of Champions, the New Year's Day stragglers' afterparty now held at Dogpatch's magnificent Midway. But The Midway hosts a few other epic, all-day, onesie-wearing outdoor affairs, from Burning Man art-car rallies with flamethrowers blazing at full blast, to DJ collectives raising tents and dropping bass outside on Michigan Street. Even when there's not a formal block party underway, this gigantic, 40,000-foot venue recreates street celebration sprawl on the massive Midway outdoor patio where you can trip out on the fantastic Pier 92 Grain Silo mural that is sometimes animated at night, and can seem animated in the daytime depending how many pills you've taken.

Best Happy Ending for a Neon Sign

DOC'S CLOCK
2417 Mission St., docsclock.com

"Cocktail Time" came to a heartbreaking halt in 2016 when beloved Mission watering hole Doc's Clock became the latest local legend to lose their lease. The bar quickly rebounded with a new location one block north at Mission and 20th streets, but the saga of its delightfully old-school vintage neon sign was just getting started. The old building's owner refused to let Doc's bring their 1950s-era legacy marquee with them, but some furious crowdsourcing, political maneuvering, and the kindness of whiskey-loving strangers has the old sign being rebuilt at Doc's new home. Doc's Clock remains a traditional dive in the ever-fancifying Mission, and return of their sign is just what the doctor ordered.

Best Dinner Where You Can Get High

FRIED CHICKEN & DABS, HARVEST OFF MISSION
33 29th St., harvestshop.com

Pesky regulations have relegated cannabis dinners to down-low underground events, even in our era of legal recreational weed. But dispensaries with smoking lounges are allowed to furnish food, and Harvest off Mission serves hits from the dab rig at its twice-monthly Fried Chicken and Dabs. The fried chicken from the nearby The Front Porch is complimentary, and the dabs are $5 a pop. It's more of a picnic-style meal than a fine-dining experience, but the dabs blaze nonstop with a dab rig specialist on hand to coach newbies through the toking process (and to constantly clean the rig's mouthpiece). Fried Chicken and Dabs alternates with another semi-monthly event, Dim Sum and Dabs at the Harvest on Geary, so keep an eye on on the HarvestShop.com site for dates and times.

Best Dolores Park Vendor Who's Gone Legit

HEY, COOKIE
HeyCookieSF.com

The sweet sight of a dirndl-wearing, pigtailed woman selling cookies has been a regular Dolores Park recurrence for the last seven years, but the Sound of Music-inspired Hey, Cookie lady now has your favorite things available in her new, real brick-and-mortar store. She hasn't totally said so long and farewell to Dolores Park, and you can still find her out there on weekends. But Hey, Cookie now has its own 18th and Mission Street pop-up shop for the foreseeable future at Alite Outpost, with Sightglass coffee, LaCroix sodas, and adorable '50s-retro kitchen decorations. We should note that Hey, Cookies are not now and have never been marijuana-infused, but they do include popular Rice Krispies treats, brownies, and a wide variety of gourmet cookies for individual servings or catered events.

Best Place to Get High at a Giants Game

CHINA BASIN PARK

We used to call the stadium "Pack Bowl Park" when it was Pac Bell Park, but the San Francisco Giants ballpark has always been one of the most weed-smokingest venues in Major League Baseball. But as SF Weekly would never recommend you break AT&T Park rules by smoking pot in the bleacher section, let us instead suggest the scenic grounds across Lefty O'Doul Bridge at China Basin Park. You get an unbeatable panoramic view of Mission Creek and the stadium scoreboard that will make you at one with the seagulls, and some captivating hidden Giants history in the form of plaques, statues, and installations that honor Giants teams of years (puffed and) past.

Best Old-School Dispensary

THE GREEN DOOR
843 Howard St., greendoorsf.com

The Green Door is as old-school as a pot shop can be, as San Francisco's first legal and licensed dispensary when it moved here from Oakland in 2005. (Technically, the late, great Dennis Peron's totally illegal San Francisco Cannabis Buyer's Club was the very first.) But the Green Door has been on the front lines of the legalization fight since the '90s, and its upstairs lounge once played host to organizing meetings of cannabis pioneers like Brownie Mary and Americans for Safe Access (ASA). Instead of going all yuppie on us, the Green Door sticks to the vintage High Times ethic of stoner artwork on the walls, with separate dedicated bars for buds and concentrates, and even a functioning version of the arcade-style claw crane game with hundreds in marijuana prizes up for grabs. And it's a lovely touch that all of the Green Door's doors are, in fact, green.

Best Marijuana Brand that's Donated a Million Meals to the Hungry

BLOOM FARMS
Getbloomfarms.com

As of press time, cannabis company Bloom Farms has actually donated a full 1,118,996 free meals to food-insecure individuals or families in need. They hit the million-meals donated mark in January of this year, but concentrate manufacturer Bloom Farms keeps diligently donating to the needy with their Give Back program that donates a meal to the hungry for every vape pen you buy. Bloom Farms is the only cannabis brand listed in last year's Top 100 Corporate Philanthropists in the Bay Area, so keep your in-"kind" donation in mind when shopping for vape pens.

Saddest Closure That We Hope Might Not Be Forever

THE GANGWAY
841 Larkin St.

This one cut us like a serrated needle through the heart. The Gangway, which had been a working-class queer hangout on Larkin Street for more than half a century, closed forever this winter. Patrons had plenty of warning, in the form of rumors for years, but it's hard to begrudge proprietor Jung Lee for wanting to retire since he'd essentially inherited the place from his deceased wife some years ago. The maritime decor and cast of characters that filled it are gone, and the space is theoretically set to become called "Young's Kung Fu Action Theater & Laundry," although Kozy Kar owner Sam Young later taunted us that that might be a ruse. There have been whispers that a Stud-type collective might look to revive it, and we've already constructed a shrine made of poppers bottles and Jose Sarria photographs in the hope it's so. In the meantime: Bye, sailor.

Best New Dive

RUMPUS ROOM

Who even open a dive anymore? Well, some bartenders did in a space on Sixth Street that has been a dive of one kind or another throughout the ages, and it feels like it could be another Blind Cat or Whiskey Thieves — which is to say, it's as good as Mission dive in the 1990s, only with a photo booth. At this trash-glam palace next to Happy Donuts, the coasters depict a woman lying supine while drinking a martini and the words "We're glad to see you're back." We're glad to see you're here, Rumpus Room. We'll take a Paloma.

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cafelamed.com

Best Reason to Go All the Way Over There for a Cocktail

WHITE CAP
3608 Taraval St., whitecapsf.com

Whenever we praise the Outer Sunset, some people tend to bristle — as if SF Weekly kept flying monkeys on retainer, and we were dispatching them to the end of the L-Taraval to that wonderful neighborhood's best-kept secrets. Sorry, not sorry, because while we've always loved and adored The Riptide, we now have another beau: White Cap. This cozy spot near the beach, about the size of a moderate one-bedroom apartment, has a sherry-centric menu and innovative yet unfussy cocktails like a Heat Gun (La Vida mezcal, La Guitana Manzanilla sherry, aloe, and lime. Incidentally, a longtime local opened it, so it's above reproach — but mostly it's just excellent.

Best Cocktail Spot that Respects the Tenderloin

BIIG
98 Turk St., barbiig.com

"We don't a menu. We have booze," proprietor Ronnie Buders told us about Biig when we checked it out. The 18-seat cocktail spot at the corner of Turk and Taylor is anything but a shot-and-a-beer spot that flaunts its patrons' hedonism to the people on the sidewalk outside. Rather, Biig took great pains to be conscious its environs and treat its neighbors with respect — plus the vast wall of unusual spirits accessed by library ladder yields intensely creative drinks that may not even have names. Buders can work wonders with overproof rum, ingredients sourced from Civic Center's nearby Heart of the City Farmers Market, and something called "dolphin milk."
98 Turk St., barbiig.com

Best New Gay Bar

GINGER'S
86 Hardie Pl.

For the umpteenth year in a row, we've had to wave bye-bye to some wonderful LGBTQ spaces and we have to wonder if the collective that runs The Stud isn't feeling some heat since they have to vacate their long-time home in only a matter of months. But lo and behold, a gay bar opened in an unusual place — the edge of the FiDi — and it isn't just a retread of whatever formerly occupied the space.

White Cap

Ginger's, a below-ground-if-not-exactly-underground place for karaoke and funtimes that's essentially attached to Pagan Idol and Rickhouse, revives Ginger's Trois, which closed in 2009. It opened in time for Pride with drinks named after other vanished gay bars (The Lexington Club, Deco Lounge) and honestly, that's just pure sweetness.

Dumbest Guilty Pleasure

TACO BELL CANTINA
701 Third St.

We waited that long for this? Yeah, OK, the Taco Bell Cantina in SoMa is kind of a bust, seeing as there aren't even margaritas, let alone Cadillac margaritas with a Tajin-salted rim like we really wanted there to be. But seeing as this slightly upscale Taco Bell — reclaimed wood! factory lights! — is the only place where you can get a Chalupa and an Anchor Steam a few blocks away from the ballpark, which means you can pre-game in your usual lowbrow way but also with some semblance of style. Your move, fancy-schmancy Taco Bell in Pacifica. Your move.

Best Lesbian Dance Party

MANGO
El Rio, 3158 Mission St.

Since 1996 dykes, queers, and longtime S.F. lesbians have gathered at El Rio for the one and only Mango. After 22 years of booty-shaking music the draw hasn't lessened in the slightest. April's event was so crowded with queers there was a one-in, one-out line outside, the wait for a drink at the bar was three people deep, and the dance floor was jam-packed. For one afternoon a month Mango offers a rare affirmation that despite rumors of a queer exodus, S.F.'s still got it. Swing by on the fourth Saturday of the month from 2-8 p.m. and dance it out.

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Mai O Mai at True Laurel

Photo by Wes Rowe

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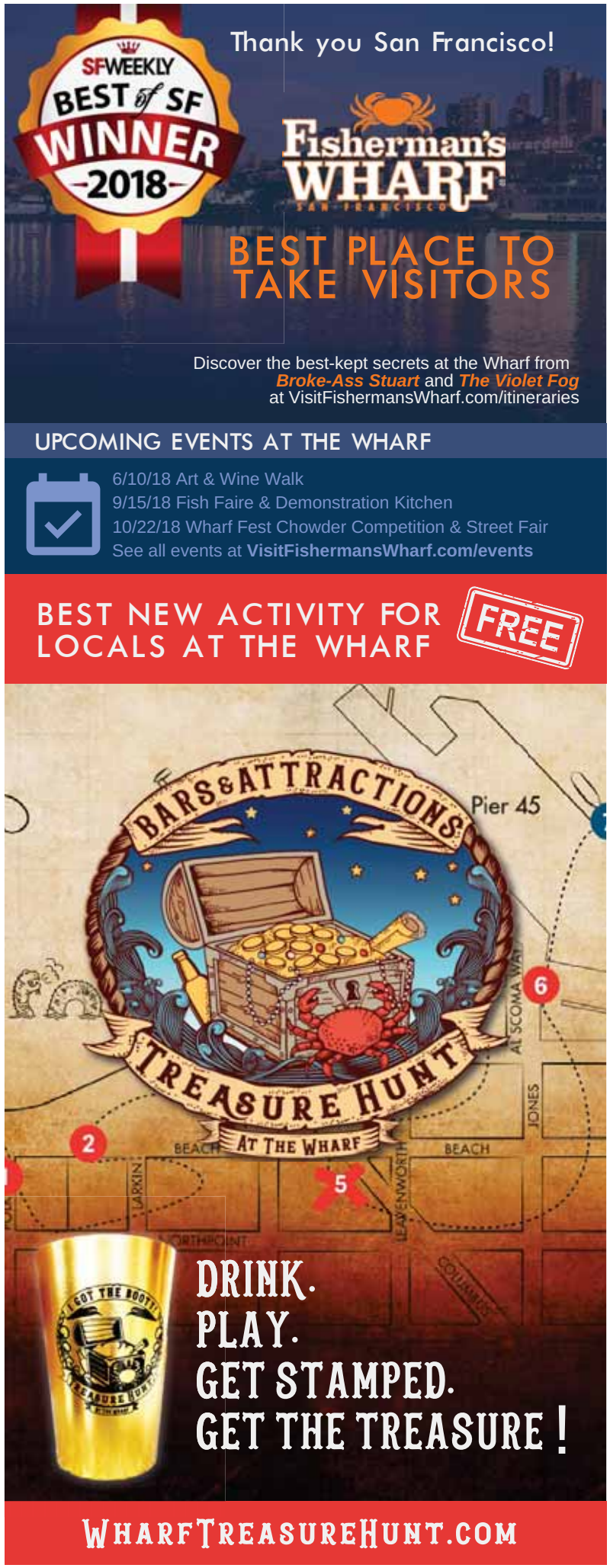

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Mau

CHICKEN WINGS
7 Mile House

Photo by Eric Pratt

BEST TEMPORARY SPOT (THAT'S STILL OPEN)

DOORS OPEN

1707 Powell St., doorsopenproject.com

When a fire tore through five North Beach businesses on the evening of St. Patrick's Day, the tight-knit neighborhood sprang immediately into recovery mode. Mere weeks later, Doors Open opened its doors as a sort of temporary food hall, serving menu items from Tuk Tuk Thai, The Salzburg, Rogue Ales Public House and others. Having already been the site of an Xmas-themed cocktail bar and the future home of Lillie Coit's, Doors Open was the logical choice to become a three-month fundraising operation to make sure the displaced employees' lives don't fall apart. Co-owner Nick Floulis and his partners pulled off a genuine feat, and our reward is delicious larb tacos and Fernet cheesecake, available until July.

THE 'WE'RE SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK' AWARD

BOOGALOOS

3396 22nd St., boogaloossf.com

There were no locusts or frogs, but a 2016 flood and a quadrupling of the rent forced Mission brunch favorite Boogaloos to go into hibernation for a while. Things looked grim, but surprisingly, the landlord later reconsidered, and Boogaloos' management used the hiatus to give its interior a refresh. Having reopened in April, 24 years after the former pharmacy began serving its mimosas and Desayuno Typico, it's once again our favorite temple of spuds.

BEST PLACE WITH KILLER VIEWS

MERSEA

699 Ave. of the Palms, Treasure Island, mersea.restaurant

One of the best things about San Francisco is leaving it in order to look at it. Granted, Treasure Island is technically part of the city, but when you eat some short-rib spaetzle under the heat lamps at Mersea, the geographical distance is mesmerizing. A food-and-drink complex built from shipping containers, Mersea achieves what few waterfront places can: It's menu-driven and affordable. In particular, the Jersey Girl sandwich (an $11 McMuffin variation with a Taylor pork roll, kimchi, arugula, and a fried egg) keeps us coming back even when the city is obscured by fog and haze.

BEST NEW BAR

TRUE LAUREL

753 Alabama St., truelaurelsf.com

We can't really decide if True Laurel is as casual as it claims, or if it's only casual in relation to its fore-"bear," David Barzelay's Michelin-starred, nightly communal dinner party Lazy Bear. Whatever the case, this Alabama Street bar marries superlative cocktails to upscale pub food, and the result is both more original and more fun than that concept might sound on paper. Come for Nic Torres' Nordic-tropic A-Dilla (made with aquavit, dill, and tropical fruits) and stay for the baked potato loaded with miso butter, scallions, bacon, and bonito flakes.

BEST NEW DELI

THE BOARD

1077 Mission St., theboardsf.com

Cleveland native Adam Mesnick has been running SoMa's Deli Board for years, but he felt the need for a more experimental outlet. When a space opened up around the block, he took it, and the result is The Board, an East Coast deli with California sensibilities that celebrates "everything between buns." The only thing cheekier might be the grilled hot dog with "habakraut," onion, and brown mustard. If it's not hot enough, put some Haba Reaper sauce on it. But if you want a proven Eye-talian classic, there's the #1, made with Genoa salami, capicola, mortadella, provolone, cherry peppers, "shredduce," salt and pepper, onion, and an Italian dressing.

SUREST LOCK FOR A MICHELIN STAR

EIGHT TABLES

8 Kenneth Rexroth Place, chinalivesf.com

In its scale and precision, the multi-station food hall China Live is impressive in its own right, but when the alterna-

Hotel Kabuki Bar

Photo by Aubrie Pick

tive-timeline Shanghai cocktail lounge Cold Drinks followed it, we began to grasp that the last piece of the puzzle, Eight Tables, was going to make an even deeper impression. Well, George Chen and co. pulled it off, from the discreet decor to the wine list to the jiu gong ge, or "nine essential flavors of Chinese cuisine." The Michelin tasters are notoriously rigid regarding which cuisines they favor, but if any contemporary Chinese restaurant can win their favor, it would be Eight Tables. In the meantime, it's likely to become the spot for dignitaries and grandees visiting from Asia.

BEST HOTEL RENOVATION

HOTEL KABUKI
1625 Post St., jdvhotels.com

Pouring $31 million into guest lodgings should automatically yield impressive results — unless you hire the world's crookedest contractor — but the bar at Japantown's Hotel Kabuki blew us away with its book-filled lobby and stunning menu. A Joie de Vivre property, it's now the home of a stellar okonomiyaki and karaage chicken, plus Stephanie Wheeler's impressive cocktails, among them the Tsuchi (maitake-washed Suntory Toki, lemon, black pepper syrup, shisho, and yuzu liqueur). The Kabuki is now a place for locals and guest to commingle, a rare feat.

BEST NEW FULL-SERVICE CAFE

NOON ALL DAY
690 Indiana St., noonallday.com

A pita sandwich called a "pocket melt" that comes with braised beef ragu, fontina, caramelized onion, and sauerkraut is just one of the many assertive, thoughtful menu items at this Piccino spinoff in brand-new building near I-280 in the Dogpatch. And the menu only gets better from there, with roasted carrot salads and taro coconut danish pushing it out in savory and sweet directions. The conceit of breakfast all day sounds like it's tailor-made for your inner child to run amok in a ball pit filled with Fruity Pebbles, but Noon All Day is nothing if not adult in palate and aesthetic — well, with soft-serve, too.

MOST NOTABLE NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

WICKED GROUNDS
289 Eighth St., wickedgrounds.com

Western SoMa is about to get a Leather Cultural District that will include bars like the Lone Star and the Eagle, but a few blocks east, a financially troubled cafe popular with the kinkster set nearly died over the winter — until a Patreon campaign put it on surer footing. To many people, a San Francisco without Wicked Grounds would be like a San Francisco without City Lights, and we're delighted it's here to stay. As owner Mir Bilodeau put it at the time, "We're 'kink concierges' first. The real value is not the food and beverage, or even the books and toys. The real value of Wicked Grounds is connecting with people."

BEST SPOT TO EAT LIKE YOU'RE IN SANTA MONICA

KITAVA

The wellness cult that endeavors to get us addicted to superfood serums and dubiously restorative tonics plays on our anxieties and, all too often, inspires a genuine fear of food. Inside a former Mission McDonald's, the successor to food-delivery startup Mealmade opened Kitava, a very Angeleno-sounding restaurant that's nowhere near vegetarian but "100-percent free of gluten, dairy, corn, soy, peanuts, refined sugar, and seed oils." Kitava isn't for people with boutique aversions; it's for people with genuine health concerns, and it's full of tasty items, like a Cuban bowl, an avocado mash, and butternut squash hummus. You don't even have to get stuck in terrible traffic on Wilshire.

BEST NEW COFFEE SPOT

PENTACLE COFFEE
64 Sixth St., no website

Longtime industry vet Bobby Valentino Sanchez didn't consecrate his SoMa cafe using dark energies channeled from the beyond. Rather, the pentacle in question refers to the tarot, where it augurs good fortune in the material world — and the ace of pentacles governs new beginnings. This Third Wave cafe, with an art gallery in back, is also a new beginning for what used to be the San Francisco Barber College, something Sanchez further updated by commissioning Nathan Rapport to paint a mural of two robed male mystics about to kiss. Sixth Street can be a hard place, and Pentacle is a respite with damn fine coffee.

BEST ADULT SLUSHIES

FOXSISTER

They're beginning to proliferate widely, but now that summer is practically here, it's time to look closely at one of the best reasons to be an adult in 2018: boozy slushies. The 24th Street Korean spot Foxsister has deliciously inauthentic dishes like kimchi nachos, and to balance out the anju (or food that you eat while drinking) are plenty of frozen soju beverages. The frozé tastes like raspberry, while the even better one is the watermelon ginger-lime. They're light, silly, and perfect for cutting through the fried chicken that is basically a mandatory order at this rock 'n' roll restaurant.

BEST DUMPLINGS

DUMPLING TIME
11 Division St., dumplingtimesf.com

As it approaches its one-year anniversary and prepares the debut of the A5 Wagyu beef gyoza, let us pause to reflect on how Omakase and Okane offshoot Dumpling Time has changed our lives for the better. There is the xiao long bao so massive you have to drink its contents through a straw, the Beijing noodles so thick they're nearly in a Bolognese sauce, and the tom yum goong, XLB made with shrimp in addition to pork plus enough beet to taint the skin hot pink. The moms of owner Kash Feng and of Omakase executive chef Jackson Yu offered their recipes and expertise, and we can only assume they approve.

BEST NEW HYBRID CREATION

BAGEL DAWGS AT WISE SONS
537 Octavia St., wisesonsdeli.com

Move over, cronuts, cruffins, and tacros. There is a hybrid bread product that doesn't lead with a portmanteau: Wise Sons' bagel dawgs. While hot dog meat has certainly risen in stature these past few years, most buns remain puffy, air-riddled, and flavorless — so proprietors Leo Beckerman and Evan and Ari Bloom had the epiphany of sheathing the meat in bagel dough, made with the same yeast. The result is $5 and only available at the Hayes Valley location.

BEST NEW PLACE KEEPING 24TH STREET REAL

ALMA COCINA
2801 Folsom St., almacocinasf.com

The stretch of 24th Street between Mission and Potrero is at serious risk of becoming Valencia 2.0. Among the many affordable Latin American eateries that have been around for decades is this newcomer, a Peruvian spot with Japanese accents. Rotisserie chicken, chicharron de cerdo, arroz chaufa — they're all here, bundled with an assortment of inventive ceviches, tied up with some excellent cocktails, and packaged affordably. This soul kitchen was wise to construct itself around its predecessor's grill, and consequently, Alma Cocina might be the ideal neighborhood restaurant.

BEST PLACE THAT'S KIND OF A CHAIN AND WE DON'T CARE

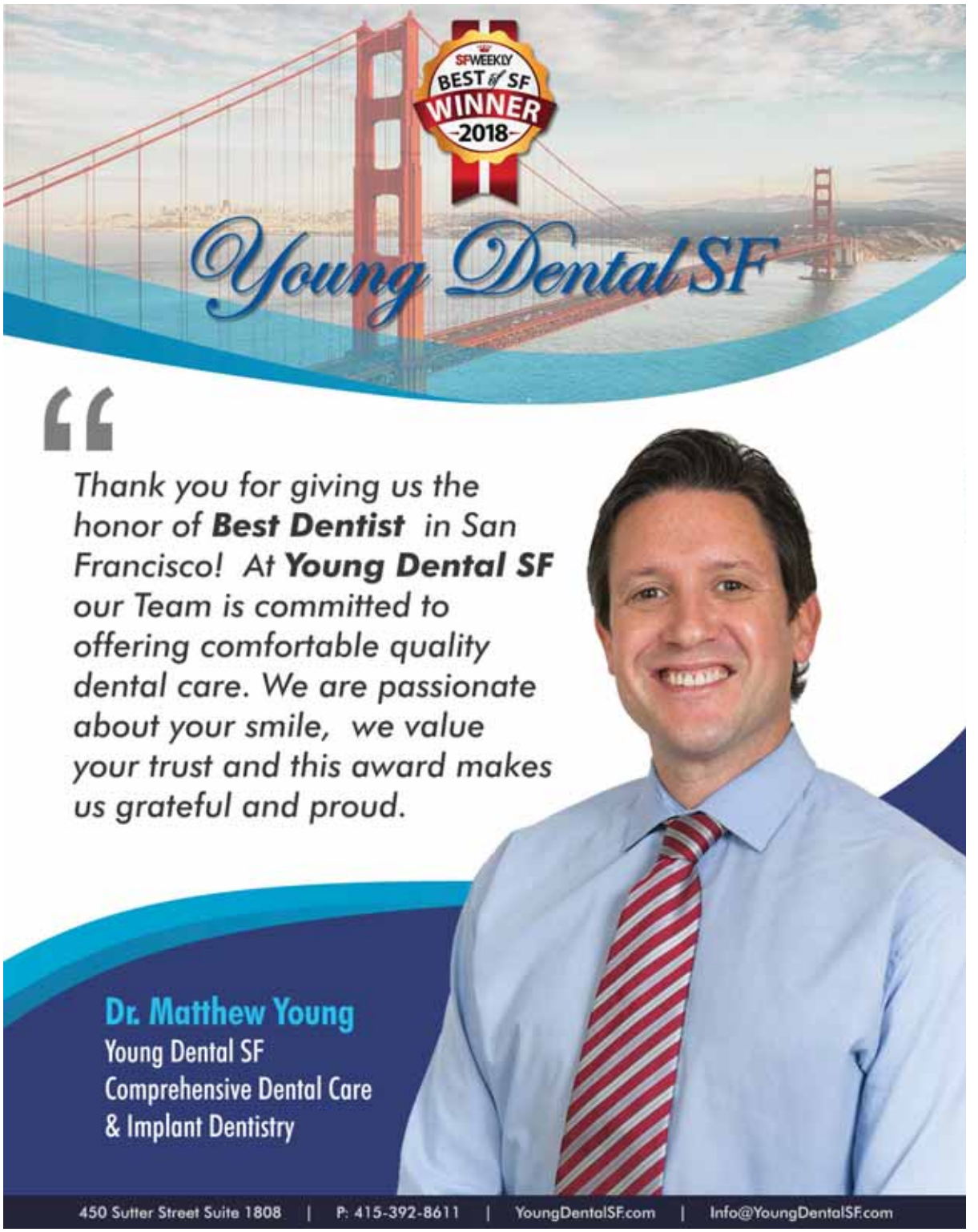
TOP ROUND ROAST BEEF
2962 24th St., eattopound.com

We don't really want to see San Francisco in chains, but we're not totally dogmatic about it, either — because sometimes, things are popular for good reason. Too many burger joints these days rip off either Double Doubles or the Super Duper/Shake Shack models, but retro-futuristic L.A. import Top Round Roast Beef doesn't even use ground beef at all. Further, it introduces S.F. to such oddities as Provel, a processed cheese much-loved in St. Louis, and beef on weck (a roast beef sandwich famous in Buffalo that comes with with "atomic" horseradish and a caraway-and-sea-salt bun). Plus there are fries loaded with more toppings than we've ever seen anywhere. Top Round might aspire to coast-to-coast ubiquity, but we can make our peace with that.

MOST EXUBERANT OMAKASE SENSATION

ROBIN
620 Gough St., robinsanfrancisco.com

The burst of chef's-choice menus in sushi restaurants appears to have quieted down in recent months, but only after coming to a climax in Hayes Valley. Chef Adam Tortosa's Robin is a rule-breaking wonderland of fresh fish, where a chef might ask you how you feel about an "uni intermission" while barely able to suppress a smile. Having taken several years and nearly three-quarters of a million dollars to realize, Robin is a heavy-hitter, a place for A5 Wagyu tartare, bluefin tuna, and enough torchon that you might think Edward Scissorhands was shaving an ice block into a sculpture. Just surrender: Omakase, after all, means "to entrust."



Smoked duck with nectarine and mint at Petit Marlowe.

Photo by Eric Pratt

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BEST PLACE FOR A FIRST DATE

PETIT MARLOWE
234 Townsend St., petitmarlowesf.com

When Leo's Oyster Bar opened a couple years ago, we fell in love with it as a place for the occasional liquid lunch amid haute-fab ambience. And SoMa "oysterette" Petit Marlowe builds on that legacy — along with another Anna Weinberg project, The Cavalier — upping the romantic quotient just enough. You can bet there are oysters and effervescent cocktails, a conceit made sturdier through chef Jennifer Puccio's Parisian dishes, like a lemony, peppery côte de boeuf tartare with buttery porcini mushrooms. Voulez-vous manger avec moi, c'est sois?

MOST HEDONISTIC FOOD FESTIVAL

SF BEER WEEK
Feb. 9-18, sfbeerweek.org

February isn't the most thrilling month — it's probably the third-worst, after November and Smarch — but it brings the return of both Russian River Brewing's Pliny the Younger and SF Beer Week. This year, the 10th anniversary of winter's most hedonistic festival included almost 1,000 separate events, starting with an opening gala and continuing onto Fieldwork's Dog Day Afternoon at Lucky 13, Star Wars Night with Lagunitas at Hogwash, and Hazefest at Old Devil Moon. That's basically 10 straight days of mild-to-moderate inebriation, one of which happened to be Valentine's Day. Sorry, sweetie, we promise to make it up to you in July.

BEST NEW POZOLE

PAPI'S
846 Geary, papissf.com

How is it possible that pozole can warm you up and make you feel as satisfied as the thickest stew? In this follow-up to Hayes Valley's Papito, the pozole anchors everything from between several mural-covered walls, a pork-and-hominy soup full of cabbage and radish. You could get the rotisserie chicken or the duck-confit burrito, but we're sticking with the pozole. The fact that a new restaurant in the Tenderloin didn't go the four-dollar-sign route is almost as comforting.

BEST SPOT TO FULFILL YOUR LATE-NIGHT PIZZA CRAVING

GOLDEN BOY
542 Green St. goldenboypizza.com

While you normally should not eat pizza past midnight, an exception can be made if you find yourself at Golden Boy Pizza, the quirky, red-tiled North Beach pizzeria famous for delicious, square-shaped slices of Sicilian-inspired focaccia pizza (which the founders dubbed "Sanfrancilian") The menu is simple and budget-friendly, since a slice of their famous clam-and-garlic pizza only costs $3.75. This old-school joint hits the right spot for any night owl (be on the lookout for the neon finger pointing at the restaurant).

BEST VARIETY OF HOUSEMADE MOCHI

BENKYODO CO
1747 Buchanan St. benkyodocompany.com

Family-owned and operating for more than 100 years, Benkyodo Company everyday makes divine mochi, manju, and other unique Japanese confectionaries. Be sure to take someone unfamiliar with Japanese desserts to see their awestruck reaction of the variety of colorful, tasty treats you are unlikely to find anywhere else in the city. Benkyodo rarely has the same selection of mochi twice, and their seasonal flavors make multiple visits necessary.

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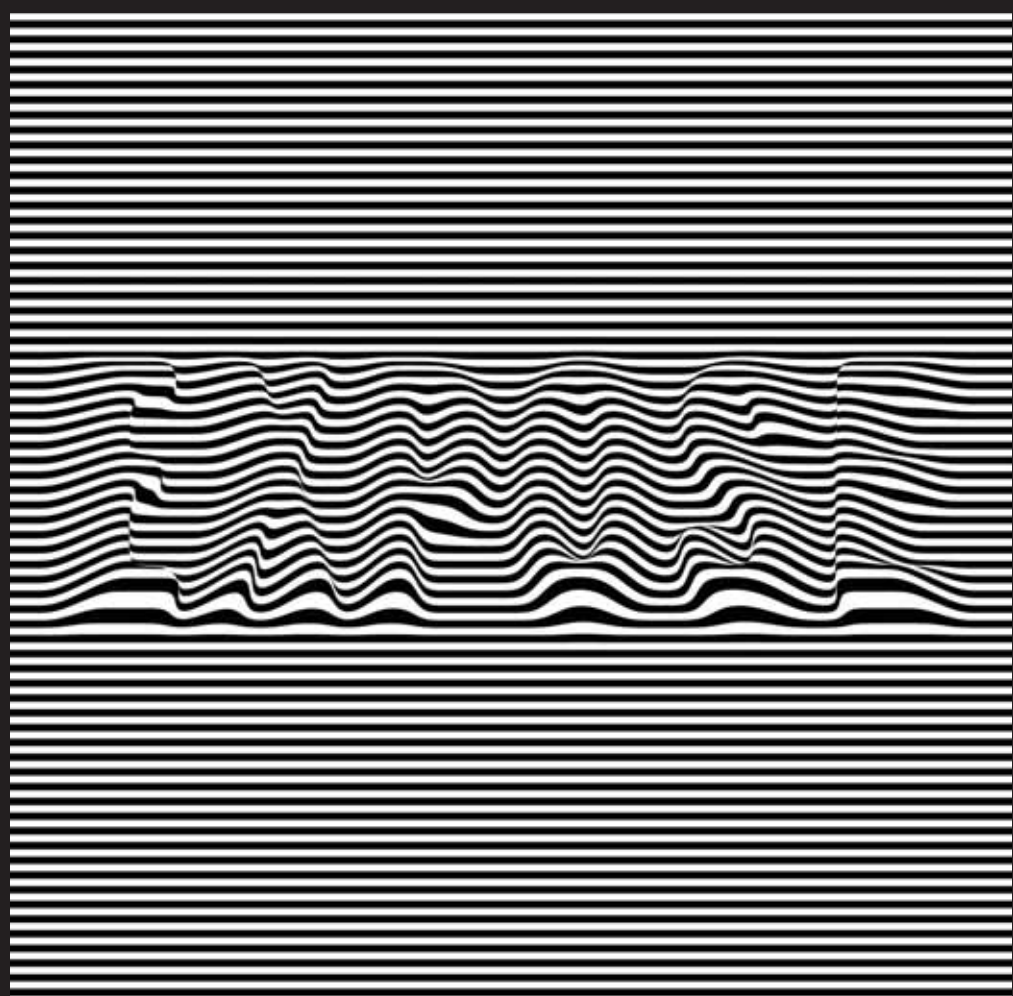
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Al Pastor Taco at Glena's.

Photo by Eric Pratt

BEST NEW AL PASTOR TACO

GLENA'S TACOS AND MARGARITAS

632 20th St., glenassf.com

Chef Michael Gaines and wife Stephanie, who cut their teeth at restaurants like Manresa, Flour + Water, and Kin Khao, opened their Dogpatch taqueria Glena's in mid-2017 as an homage to their SoCal roots, and a deep and abiding love for Cal-Mex cuisine shines through all of the menu here. Can't-miss menu items include the fried chicken torta (which sidelines just about every other version of this sandwich in town) and the surprisingly amazing tofu taco — and we should mention the can't-miss off-menu quesadilla as well. But the star of the taco show, as it often is at taquerias worth their tortillas, is the al pastor — an expertly marinated version of the pork shoulder classic, served with pineapple, charred onions, and salsa verde. Gaines' al pastor, though it might not be shaved off a spinning vertical grill, rivals the best of Mexico City's holes-in-the-wall, and those who've been know that's saying a lot. Also, the margaritas and alomas here are *muy perfecto*.

BEST MICHELIN-STARRED CALLION PANCAKE

MISTER JIU'S

28 Waverly Place, misterjius.com

In the two years since it opened, chef Brandon Jew's modern culinary love letter to Chinatown, Mister Jiu's, has morphed from offering a banquet-only, prix fixe menu, to offering an eclectic and inventive, seasonal a la carte menu at all times. There are delicious takes on stir-fried vegetables and hot-and-sour soup, some downright sensational orange chicken wings, and a couple of large-format dishes like a Peking-style roast duck and a salt-baked whole trout that are best shared. But you could easily make a dim-sum style meal here any night of the week, replete with excellent cocktails, a cheeky twist on the pork bun with "Dutch crunch" dough, and an excellent, deep-fried, puffy and crispy, crave-worthy scallion pancake — served here with a deconstructed *sauce soubise* with crispy onions on the side, because this isn't just average Chinese food, this is Michelin-starred Chinese food.

BEST NEW TAPAS

BARVALE

661 Divisadero St., barvalesf.com

Locally prolific restaurateur Adriano Paganini and his Back of the House Restaurant Group debuted not one but two new restaurant concepts in 2017, and both were immediate hits in their respective neighborhoods. First there was A Mano, the value-oriented, pasta-and-pizza spot in Hayes Valley that's doing Paganini's earlier restaurant, Beretta, one better on the Italian front, drawing lines just about every day. Then, in December, came barvale, the group's first attempt at Spanish cuisine, in the former La Urbana space at Divisadero and Grove. As pintxos and tapas in S.F. go,

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Charred cucumber at Gibson

Photo by Peter Lawrence Kane

you're not going to find many finer examples than what's on offer from chef Patricio Duffoo — don't miss the perfect and petite *croquetas de jamon*, and the excellent olive-oil poached prawns — with a well-balanced array of original cocktails to boot. And Duffoo shows his skills with the more Californian spins on the menu as well, as with a "bagna cauda"-style chicory salad topped with manchego and almonds.

BEST NEW FANCY DATE SPOT IN THE 'LOIN

GIBSON
111 Mason Street, gibsonsf.com

There are plenty of cheap date spots (and dates!) to be found in the Tenderloin, but as the neighborhood ever so slowly gentrifies at its edges, there are some pricier options as well, including the new restaurant in the refurbished Hotel Bijou, Gibson. Chef Robin Song, who won the Chronicle's Rising Star honor a couple years back for his work at Hog & Rocks, has been toiling patiently for two decades waiting to craft a unique menu like this on his own — including previous stints in the prestigious kitchens of Ame, Plum, Central Kitchen, and Copenhagen's Ralae. You can sit at the bar with a signature Gibson (there are three versions on the menu) and snack on house-made bread and spreads (including duck liver mousse, and fresh goat cheese with seaweed and trout roe), or you can sit in the elegantly adorned dining room and put things in Chef Song's hands with a nightly tasting menu. There are a la carte options as well, most of them cooked over a live fire, including a smoky grilled Sonoma duck, and fire-roasted brassicas with potato and fermented radish.

BEST PHO COMPETITION

KEVIN'S NOODLE HOUSE
1833 Irving St., kevinnoodlehouse.com

PHO PHU QUOC PPQ BEEF NOODLE HOUSE *Restaurant,*
1816 Irving St., ppqsf.com

Karl the Fog makes steamy, comforting pho a staple in San Francisco, and fortunately, we have plenty of options. Two of the best, Kevin's Noodle House and Pho Phu Quoc, sit on opposite sides of Irving Street near 19th Avenue, turning a pho excursion into agonizing indecision. Do you go to PPQ, where they'll know your favorite order in due time and where you can find distinct types of pho, like coconut curry? Or do you go to Kevin's, which has six locations in the Bay Area and noodles consistently cooked to tender perfection despite the briskly run operation? Frequent Irving Street often enough, and you can have the best of both worlds.

SADDEST RESTAURANT CLOSURE

PIZZA ORGASMICA
3157 Fillmore St.

Local chain Pizza Orgasmica shuttered its final location on Fillmore Street after 22 years of business. Troubles began in 2015, when its spot in Inner Richmond closed and one of the company's co-founders renamed the Embarcadero location to Gochees Pizza. Last summer, the San Rafael location also closed up shop after six years. Reviews of the actual pizza were mixed, but patrons on Yelp loved Pizza Orgasmica most as a late-night pit stop and for its veggie options, with one congratulating them on making broccoli taste great on pizza. "I have never eaten this pizza sober, but have also never been disappointed," one Yelper said. A basic goal, but one the pizzeria consistently met.

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Best Recurring Graffiti

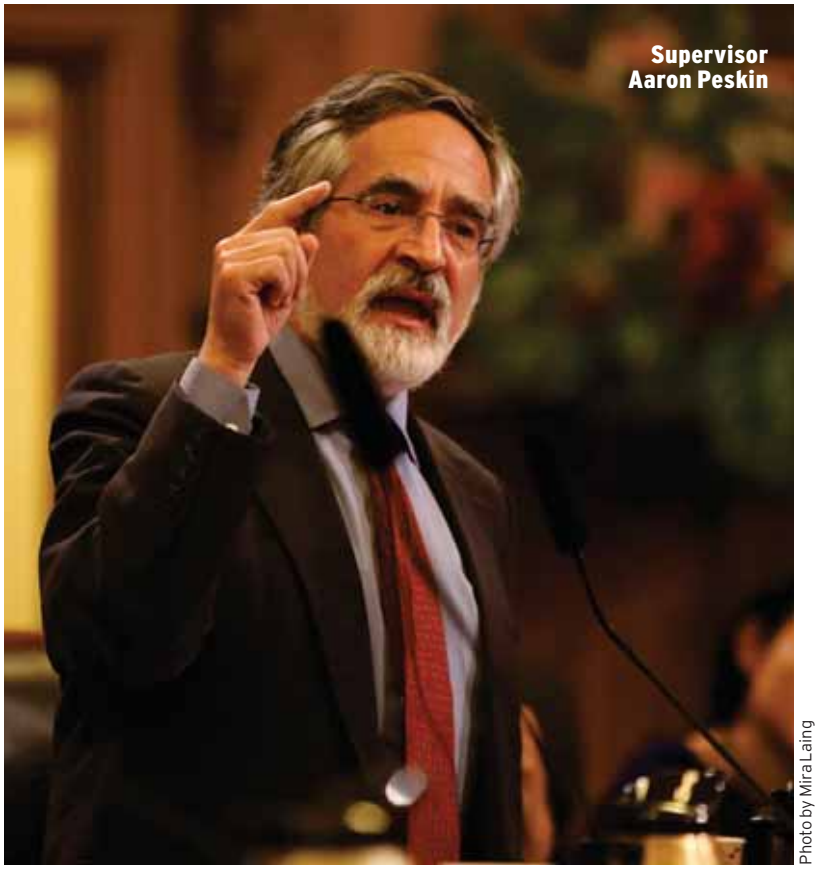
MAGIC WAND

Are they microphones? Robots? Or badly drawn Boba Fetts? When a new series of tags hit the Mission in February the images confused some people — but anyone who'd ever seen or used a Hitachi Magic Wand immediately got the joke. Arguably the least-sexy of all sex toys, the wand — originally manufactured in Japan as a large, plug-in muscle massager — has for decades been repurposed for more orgasm-inducing areas of the body. It's old-school, loud, laughably large, and unequivocally awesome — in other words, the perfect subject for a tag. Mystery Hitachi fan-art creator, we bow to you.

Most Outspoken Politician

AARON PESKIN

From scooters to firefighting, election fundraising to emergency call boxes, Supervisor Aaron Peskin, who represents Chinatown and North Beach, is short — but he has no shortage of strong opinions. Out of everyone on the Board of Supervisors, he is arguably the most active, drafting affordable housing measures, demanding transparency over election finances, and allegedly helping to form a coup that ousted London Breed from her spot as acting mayor. But legislating is one thing and speaking is another. In the past few months alone Peskin has chewed out firefighters for not attacking a blaze to his liking, criticized "tech bros" for dropping scooters on our streets, and accused tech mogul Ron Conway of being Breed's "kingmaker." If there's a political battle to be waged, you can bet Peskin will be in the middle of it, handing out juicy quotes like candy.



Supervisor Aaron Peskin

Photo by Mira Laing

Biggest Mayoral Race Troll

CONOR JOHNSTON

This year's mayoral race has brought out the worst in a lot of people, not least a former chief of staff to candidate London Breed: Conor Johnston. He became known for his angry text messages and outbursts at community meetings while working for her, and now — despite not being on her campaign's payroll — he's once again taken on the task of being her guard dog. Johnston writes daily rage-filled Facebook comments to supporters of Leno and Kim, trolls reporters who criticize his candidate, and pens furious responses to voters on Twitter, presumably in an attempt to win Breed's adoration so that if she wins, she'll rehire him for a new role in Room 200.

Best Crashing of a Mayoral Debate

AMY FARAH-WEISS

While the polls don't indicate that Amy Farah-Weiss has any real chance of winning June's mayoral election, she's undoubtedly proven herself to be a candidate with fortitude. Despite never having held political office, Farah-Weiss has held her own during mayoral debates — both the ones she was, and was not, invited to. "Stop pulling on my shirt!" she yelled at security as she rushed the stage at the Castro Theatre in March. Amazingly, after some back-and-forth, she was permitted to stay — perhaps because Senator Mark Leno had to back out at the last minute due to an eye injury — and she held her own in front of a crowd of hundreds.

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Sup. Hillary Ronen

Photo by Jessica Christian

Most Passionate City Hall Speech

SUP. HILLARY RONEN, BEFORE LONDON BREED WAS OUSTED AS ACTING MAYOR

The Board of Supervisors has several particularly eloquent members, who, when triggered by something they care deeply about, can launch an amazing speech. Choosing this year's best was not easy — Sup. Malia Cohen delivered a powerful tirade about the failed cleanup at the Hunters Point Shipyard in April — but this award goes to Sup. Hillary Ronen, whose furious and emotional oratory about mayoral candidate London Breed in January is still being cited by the media as a rare moment of transparency during the race. On the day Breed was famously ousted from her seat as Acting Mayor, Ronen called out the "white, rich men, billionaires, in this city who have steered the policies of the past two mayoral administrations, if not more. They got us into this absolute mess we are in today, where poor people and people of color cannot afford to live in this city. … It is absolutely ridiculous and outrageous, and it weighs on me as a supervisor. I can't sleep at night," she said. The political musical chairs that followed quickly eclipsed her raw, occasionally tearful words, but her address still goes down as one of the bravest, most passionate speeches we've ever witnessed at City Hall.

Hardest-Working Drag Queen

CARNIE ASADA
instagram.com/carnieasadasf

She's one of the drag queens in residence at the new Hamburger Mary's in the Castro, which means she also plays hostess and seats people in addition to doing pop-up lip syncs. She hosts a drag brunch on Saturdays at the Lookout called Lips and Lashes. She hosts several regular parties at downtown Oakland's only gay bar, The Port. She pops up regularly in the mix at Mother at Oasis (Saturdays), as well as playing performer and host at several parties at Beaux, including the Thursday '90s/aughts-centric My So-Called Night. Carnie Asada is, therefore, the hardest-working drag queen of her generation in San Francisco, with barely a night each week that she isn't painting her face and prancing around in heels. And henny, she better be making a living with all these gigs, because unlike a lot of queens in these parts, she struts, slays, and works for them bills. A lot.

Most Talented and Uncategorizable Native Cis Male Drag Offspring

TAYLOR MAC
taylormac.org

Those lucky enough to have seen Taylor Mac's *24-Decade History of Popular Music* last September at the Curran understand that he is an artist of the highest caliber, and one who simultaneously embraces the humanizing ethos that "perfection is for assholes." His epically long, exhaustive style of performance is part of *modus operandi* as an artist, and the *24-Decade* piece is its crowning masterwork. As he has said, "I [want] to put the audience in a situation in which they are under some kind of complicated circumstance and I'm under some sort of complicated circumstance and as a result of falling apart together we're building bonds." He found his first inspiration, he says, growing up as a gay boy in Stockton and coming to the first AIDS Walk in San Francisco, as a teenager. The wonder he saw there of collective sorrow combined with collective power and self-expression took root and has driven him as a performer ever since, so in a way he's originally a San Francisco drag queen, and he has San Francisco to thank for the inspiration that followed — even though he now resides in New York. For those who missed him last year or who couldn't get enough, he'll be back later this year at the Curran with a new show — likely a microcosm of the *24-Decade History of Popular Music* focused mostly on Christmas music — dubbed *Taylor Mac's Holiday Sauce*. *taylormac.org*

Most Overdue Renaming of Racist Monument

PHELAN AVENUE

Like the rest of the country in the wake of the deadly white nationalist protests in Charlottesville, Va., San Francisco has been cleaning up shop. Supervisor Norman Yee did some reexamining and it turns out, Phelan Avenue commemorates the racist legacy of our former mayor. Though James D. Phelan — who served as the city's chief executive from 1897-1902 — had a long history of anti-Japanese and -Chinese policies, he is best known for his 1920 Senate reelection campaign promise to "Keep California White." In April, the City College of San Francisco and its surrounding community voted to rename Phelan Avenue as Frida Kahlo Way — honoring the legacy of the famous Mexican artist instead. Kahlo, who CCSF Chancellor Mark Rocha called a "pioneering feminist artist" who was

Phelan Avenue chiefly services CCSF's Ocean campus.

Photo by Shannon Badiee/Wikicommons

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ahead of her time on questions of social justice, will join her husband Diego Rivera in spirit, whose "Pan American Unity" mural belongs to the campus.

Best BART Station Performer

KALIN FREEDMAN

Commuters pass all sorts of transit musicians during their shuffle home but likely miss the chance to stop and listen. But 23-year-old Kalin Freedman meets them where they're at — waiting for their train at the Powell Street BART platform. The Richmond resident and Berkeley City College student adds a relaxing element of jazz music to a hectic station with his saxophone and trusty speaker which lights up like a colorful game of Tetris. Freedman has eight years of playing instrumental under his belt, but sticks to covers of jazz and R&B musicians, like Drake and Bryson Tiller. For roughly three days a week during rush hour, Freedman's live music helps commuters snap out of work mode and begin to unwind.

Juiciest Mayoral Campaign Sabotage

LONDON BREED'S PREFERRED URL, LONDONFORMAYOR.COM, REDIRECTING TO MARKLENO.COM

Long before President of the Board of Supervisors London Breed declared her mayoral candidacy, the obvious and preferred URL for her campaign, LondonBreed.com, was not an option. As early as February, it went from bad to worse — a cybersquatter demanded $100,000 for the domain, which Breed's campaign did not pay. So instead, it began redirecting to the campaign website of one of her main mayoral competitors, Mark Leno. His campaign insisted it had nothing to do with it, but that didn't stop Breed's former campaign adviser, Conor Johnston, from snarkily fueling skepticism about the claim. "We're thinking of buying hypocrite.org and glasshouses.com and forwarding them to markleno.com too," he told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Both campaigns have seemingly moved on from the spectacle, but the website redirect continues.

Best Political Memes

UPZONE THE MEMES

In the social media-fueled housing debate between upzoning and anti-gentrification evangelists, the statuses that stand out are the crude but brilliant Photoshops of savage YIMBY critic Upzone the Memes. Billing themselves as "a nicer Gay Shame fighting gentrification one meme at a time," Upzone the Memes gives the condo developers and their BFFs cruel and unusual punishment with crowdsourced satirical memes. Hysterical Photoshopped takedowns of state senator Scott Wiener and pro-development activist Sonja Trauss are posted alongside amusing typos found in poorly proofread election mailers, to create the Thomas Nast political cartoons of our digital era.

Best Rogue Street Artist

ECLAIR BANDERSNATCH

You've seen the recognizable sidewalk stencils of "San Francisco's Elusive Graffiti Queen" Eclair Bandersnatch even if you don't know it. Bandersnatch's masterful and gender politics-charged sidewalk and wall graffiti etchings delve into economic justice, sexuality, and local politics on a public surface near you. With messages like "Milk Would Have Marched for Manning" and "It's not My Fault My Mama Dropped Me in a Box of Glitter and I've Been Shining Ever Since!," Eclair Bandersnatch's rogue graffiti stencils are an uncompromising voice in the ongoing San Francisco resistance.

Best Local Contortionist

DWOIRA GALILEA

Stretching the limits of physical fluidity with performances that include impossible armstands and full-body exotic animal paint, the amazingly bendy Dwoira Galilea (pronounced "Dora") combines death-defying contortion, trapeze, and aerial stunts and with a healthy twist of theatrical flair. The self-described "Aerialist, Glamour Enthusiast, and Hustle Queen" has been training since the age of nine, and continues to bust out seemingly impossible moves with local troupes like Vau de Vire Society and Wooden Nickel Circus. Galilea's elaborate hairstyles and wardrobe give the act a surreal bent, as she displays amazing definition in muscles that most of us don't even know exist.

Best Raunchy Ukelele Performer

RACHEL LARK

The traditionally harmless, innocent ukelele becomes a weapon of patriarchy-smashing destruction in the hands of feminist musical comic Rachel Lark, one of San Francisco's best, most provocative songwriters who's not afraid to rhyme "hymen" with (Gloria) "Steinem." Hailed by Salon as "the poster girl for period sex," Lark has gained cult-following fame with her regular appearances on Dan Savage's Savage Lovecast and as the musical entertainment at Bawdy Storytelling. Lark's latest single "Naughty Bits," a politically charged takedown of FOSTA-SESTA internet speech restrictions, adds to her lineup of classics like "It's Hard to Be a Feminist and Still Want Dick," "Warm, Bloody, and Tender"," and "I Wanna Lose Five Pounds." And for a hilarious but depressing read, check out the treasury of ignorant "what men across the country have been saying" comments on the About section of RachelLark.com.

Best Lesbian Dance Party

MANGO

El Rio, 3158 Mission St. facebook.com/MANGOSF

Since 1996 dykes, queers, and longtime S.F. lesbians have gathered at El Rio for the one and only Mango. After 22 years of booty-shaking music the draw hasn't lessened in the slightest. April's event was so crowded with queers there was a one-in, one-out line outside, the wait for a drink at the bar was three people deep, and the dance floor was jam-packed. For one afternoon a month Mango offers a rare affirmation that despite rumors of a queer exodus, S.F.'s still got it. Swing by on the fourth Saturday of the month from 2-8 p.m. and dance it out.

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BEST PLACE TO CLEAN UP AFTER BURNING MAN

IMPERIAL DAY SPA

1875 Geary Blvd. imperialdayspa.com/
As anyone who's spent a week on the Playa knows, it takes more than just a simple shower to get rid of the powdery dust caked into every imaginable crevice. Imperial Day Spa has got your back (and everywhere else, too). Sign up for a purification scrub and oil massage ($90), and you'll be loofah-ed, soaped, covered in grated cucumber, bathed in milk, and massaged with oil. It's no frills the tables are covered in plastic and the scrub-down is intense but after 80 minutes, you'll leave feeling completely reborn.

BEST RETAIL STORE LINE TO WAIT IN

EVERLANE

461 Valencia St. everlane.com

OK, first of all, how is this a thing?! Whoever believes the brick-and-mortar retail industry is dying hasn't walked past Valencia Street's new Everlane on a Saturday afternoon. The minimalist clothing retailer drew a powerful following online, but the opportunity to see, touch, and try on clothes in person is clearly so irresistible that the store — which, for the record, is not tiny — regularly fills to capacity. Expect anything from a five- to 20-minute wait outside the shop on weekends. You'll probably get some stares from passersby, but they clearly have no idea what a steal that short-sleeve button-up silk shirt is.

BEST NEW TATTOO SHOP

TEMPERANCE TATTOO

236 Leavenworth St. temperance-tattoosf.com

In a city chock full of tattoo parlors, it's not an easy thing to open up one and immediately see rampant success. But Temperance Tattoo, which launched in summer 2017, already has pretty full books for its three stellar artists, who all work in wildly different styles. Owner Oliver Kenton made a name for himself with intricately-detailed blackwork designs. Regina "Push" Estrada draws achingly beautiful flowers, and specializes in scar coverups. And Cho's work, with its thick black lines and colorful Lisa-Frank-esque interiors, defies definition. The trio are doing great work in a city filled with talented tattooers, and we're excited to see what this little shop does next.

BEST STORE FOR WRITERS

TOPDRAWER

980 Valencia St. kolo.com

If spending an hour choosing the perfect pen sounds like a dream come true, then Topdrawer is for you. The quirky, new, little shop on the 900 block of Valencia carries dozens of pens and pencils, from fine-tipped to erasable, and notebooks for every possible purpose. It's a stationery store for grownups, and is hard to walk out of without dropping $10 on pens, another $35 on stationery, and perhaps $35 for an LED camplight because why not.

BEST PLACE TO SHOP WHILE HIGH

DAISO

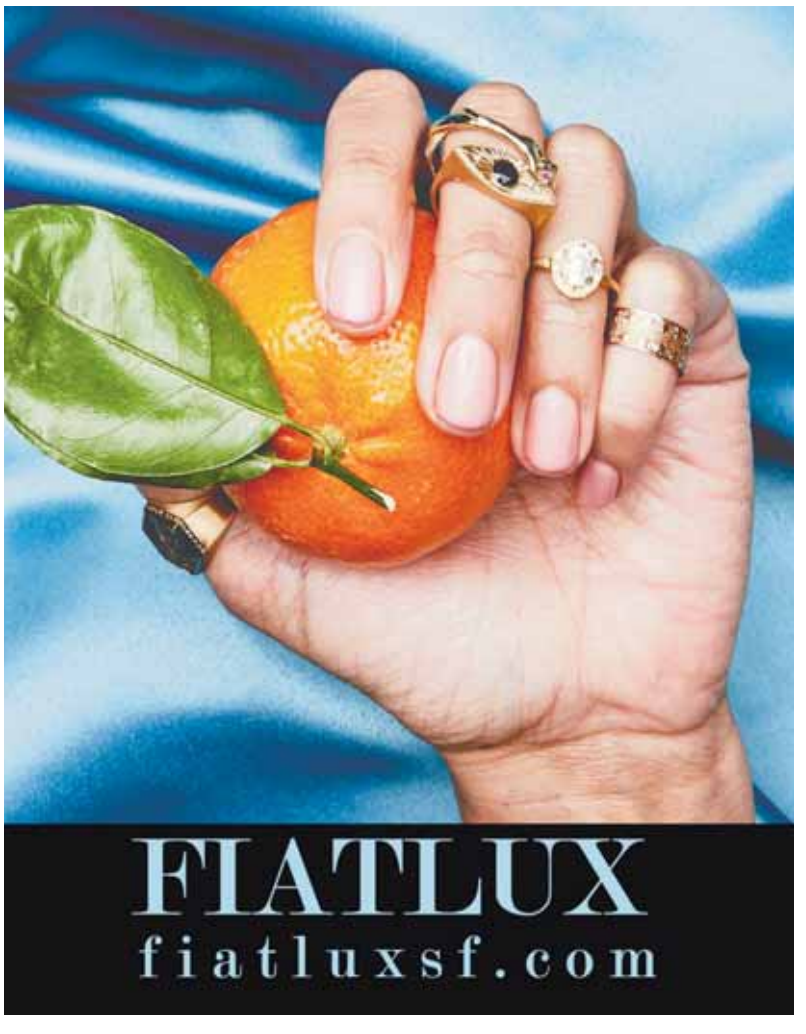
570 Market St., 22 Peace Plz., and 2300 16th St. daisojapan.com

Daiso is colorful, cute, and bizarre as hell. Trust us this one: It's a great place to be after a few hits of that vape pen. Stroke strange fluffy underwear, spend an hour agonizing over which teddy bear teacup to take home, and fill your basket with every Japanese snack imaginable. (We recommend tomato gummies, dried squid, green tea Pocky.) In between all the kawaii, there are actually useful things, like cooking supplies and dog poop bags and disposable underwear. But the best part is that no matter how long you spend there and how much you buy, few items are over $1.50, so a basket full of cell phone accessories and washi tape is hardly going to break the bank.

BEST BOOKSTORE FOR ANIME AND MANGA FANS

KINOKUNIYA

1581 Webster St. kinokuniya.com
With a plethora of hard-to-find Japanese books and magazines, Japantown's Kinokuniya is nothing short of heaven on earth for anime and manga fans. Their selection apart from the comics and cartoons include imported toys, knick-knacks, and movies that anyone interested in Japanese culture would enjoy. For those new to Japanese animation and comic books, Kinokuni-



ya's entire bottom floor dedicated to anime and manga is a perfect spot to dip your toes into the fantasy worlds that have captivated the imaginations of countless people. (Be sure to check out the Studio Ghibli section!)

BEST PLACE TO MEET A PARROT

THE ANIMAL CONNECTION
2550 Judah St. animalconnectionsf.com

Proudly billed as San Francisco's "largest independent pet store," The Animal Connection is the perfect place to meet your new furry, scaly, or feathery best friend. The 31 year running Sunset pet shop always has new exotic birds and parrots coming in and out of the store, and most of them are very friendly to humans. Even if you are not in the market to purchase a severe macaw or veiled chameleon, you are more than welcome to come in and say hello to the exotic birds, reptiles, fish, and rodents at the store.

HOTTEST NEW SPOT TO GET PIERCED

FIAT LUX
3169 16th St. fiatluxsf.com

Calling all septums, lips, tongues, and ears. The latest place to be pierced by talented professionals happens to be one of the Mission District's best jewelry shops: Fiat Lux. Cofounder Marie McCarthy, who also owns Rose Gold Tattoo and Piercing in the Haight, bridges the two by sharing her talented piercing staff. Sparkles abound with jewelry made in-house, or by L.A. design firm bvla. Swing by Saturday afternoons to get some diamonds in your lip or sapphires in your nose.

BEST SPOT TO BUY FROM LOCAL DESIGNERS

GATHER
541 Octavia St. gathersf.com

Hayes Valley boutiques are jam-packed with stationery from France, shoes from Italy, and vintage dresses from Japan. But one shop doesn't stray so far to find its wares: Gather's vast array of gifts, jewelry, clothes, and art is sourced primarily from local artists. Swing by for bags by Lady Alamo, clothes by Alamere Designs, cards by Brenna Daugherty, or soap by Etta & Billie, and put your money toward the artisans that reside in our hilly city.

BEST LAUNDROMAT

OAK STREET LAUNDRY
1130 Oak St.

This Divisadero corridor laundromat hits all the basics: It's clean, there are lots of washers and dryers, the prices aren't insane, and it's conveniently located across the street from Vinyl Coffee and Wine Bar. But what really propels this laundromat from "acceptable" to "freakin' awesome" is what's on TV: non-stop *Soul Train*. Watch your socks spin around with Jackson 5 playing in the background, grab something out of the vending machine while Michael Jackson serenades the room, and just *try* not to start dancing and humming along to Chuck Berry while you fold your undies.

BEST NEW PRETENTIOUS BUSINESS

LAUNDRÉ
2401 Mission St. laundre.co

You won't find *Soul Train* on the TV at Laundré, but you will find avocado toast. The high-end laundromat on the corner of Mission and 20th street is obnoxious as hell, in part because it's so great. Yes, each load of dirty clothes costs upwards of $10 to wash and dry, the minimalist decor screams wasted space, and the $4.75 lavender latte is beyond pretentious. But, the washers have a self-cleaning cycle, an unprecedented luxury when you're forced to share with strangers. The food is pricey ($8 for avocado toast??) but delicious, as is the coffee. The atmosphere is calm and quiet. As much as we loathe admitting it, if you're going to spend time and money doing laundry, there's really no nicer place to do so in all of S.F.

BEST FLOWER SHOP

BI-RITE MARKET
3639 18th St. and 550 Divisadero St., biritemarket.com

There's something to be said for buying flowers that don't resemble the exploding, overstuffed bouquets that you'd find in your grandma's house. Bi-Rite has perfected the art of finding unusual flora and fauna, packaging them in simple brown paper for that fresh-from-the-farmers-market look. Large, alien-like Proteas sit next to small pompoms of Dahlias and delicate, sexual Calla Lilies, packing that wow-factor punch. Grab a bouquet or two next time you're picking up $5 oranges and $12 cheese.

QUICKEST WAY TO SEE IF IT'S FOGGY AT THE BEACH

FOG TODAY
fog.today

Everyone already knows that Weather Underground does a fair — if not perfect — job of mapping out the capricious microclimates of SF on the daily. But temperature at the beach is not really as important as the question of whether or not the fog has burned off. Thankfully we have a handy web-based tool built by SF resident and BuzzFeed reporter Logan Williams called Fog Today, which takes publicly available satellite images of the city and shows you the present cloud/fog situation, and loops of both the last two hours, and the last 24 hours. The images come from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's new geostationary Earth-observation satellite, GOES-16. Now, on those confusing days in July, Fogust, and September, when you wake up saying, "Is this maybe a beach day?", you can hop on Fog Today and get your answer without having to guess and be disappointed after applying sunblock and packing that cooler.

FRIENDLIEST FABRIC STORE EXPERIENCE

BRITEX FABRICS
117 Post St., britexfabrics.com

It may not be the cheapest game in town if you're designing on a dime, but 66-year-old Britex remains one of the better retail experiences in the city if you're in the market for fabric — as well as just a colorful oasis in Union Square wherein to find some DIY inspiration. The downstairs is devoted to woolens and dressmaking, while you'll find suiting and denim upstairs, as well as a notions department, and upholstery fabric in back. Everyone who works here is helpful and knowledgeable, especially the Russian/Slavic lady who sometimes works the upholstery station and who's not afraid to offer her opinions and guidance on your furniture recovering projects. Also, if you're in the market for some crazy buttons to liven up an old coat, or a pair of serious, high-end scissors, this is the place to shop.

BEST USED KITCHEN SUPPLY STORE WE HOPE NEVER DIES

COOKIN'
339 Divisadero St.

Functioning like a large and unruly flea market stall, with items for sale stacked and piled in every nook and corner, Cookin' has been humbly serving the needs of home cooks, food stylists, and professional chefs for 37 years now. The vintage cookware emporium, stocked with the help of a small and loyal army of pickers, may not be long for this world depending on the ever-evolving mood of its curmudegonly owner, Judy Kaminsky. (She was complaining to the *Chronicle* seven years ago that she was sick of the "kids" who come in "with their laptops, don't say hello, never buy anything, and just go home and Yelp about us.") But for now you can still go in, and if you show some interest and respect, get some good advice on seasoning old cast iron pans, find a gorgeous vintage bundt pan, and buy yourself a lightly used Le Creuset Dutch oven. The prices aren't bad, but generally marked up from the flea markets where most of this stuff came from. And you can feel satisfied that you've supported a quirky and unique local business that's been keeping it real since 1981 — long before Divisadero became the new Valencia. Just please, please don't pick things up at random and put them back somewhere that Judy doesn't think they belong.

BEST REASONABLY PRICED HANDMADE JEWELRY

LAVA 9
542 Hayes St., lava9.com

This small shop on Hayes Street's bustling retail strip stands out among its neighbors as offering some high-fashion jewelry and leather goods without the crazy New San Francisco prices found at some of the newer boutiques nearby. Opened over 26 years ago, before Hayes Valley became anything like it is today, Lava 9 specializes in handmade metal work and baubles, much of it from American craftspeople, and priced well for gift giving that won't kill your whole holiday season or birthday budget. Also, in an age of sameness and blind grasping at "luxury" brands, shops like this feel refreshingly homespun and down-to-earth.

BEST SHOP CAT

OWEN OF AARDVARK BOOKS

227 Church St., aardvark-books.com
Where too many landlords deprive tenants of fuzzy family members, Aardvark's orange cat Owen comes along. Unlike the store's previous cat, he adapted beautifully to the shop setting around eight years ago — and according to employee Rob Cahow, he's very people-oriented. Since then, the kitty has developed a bit of a fan base, drawn to the store just to say hi. Like most cats, the 11-year-old mostly sleeps and rotates his usual spot from under a table to a new chair or behind the counter. The sounds of cars and the F-line usually keep him from darting out the door, but Cahow says it's a real fight against Owen's instincts when a pigeon is nearby.

BEST HIPSTER SHOE STORE

NICEKICKS
1420 Haight St., nicekicks.com

The former Shoe Biz on Haight is on new footing since merging with NiceKicks, an Austin, Tex., purveyor of sneakers for the athletically obsessed. NiceKicks skews toward sportswear much more than Shoe Biz did, but it's a two-floor sneaker-head's paradise with all of the latest signature athlete shoes, gear, and limited-release ballcaps. NiceKicks' golden sneakers dangling from the ceiling are one of the city's coolest retail interior displays to behold even if you're not shopping for shoes, and with the NBA playoffs in full swing it's a must-hit destination for fans who wish to be current on their Steph Curry and Kevin Durant fan gear.

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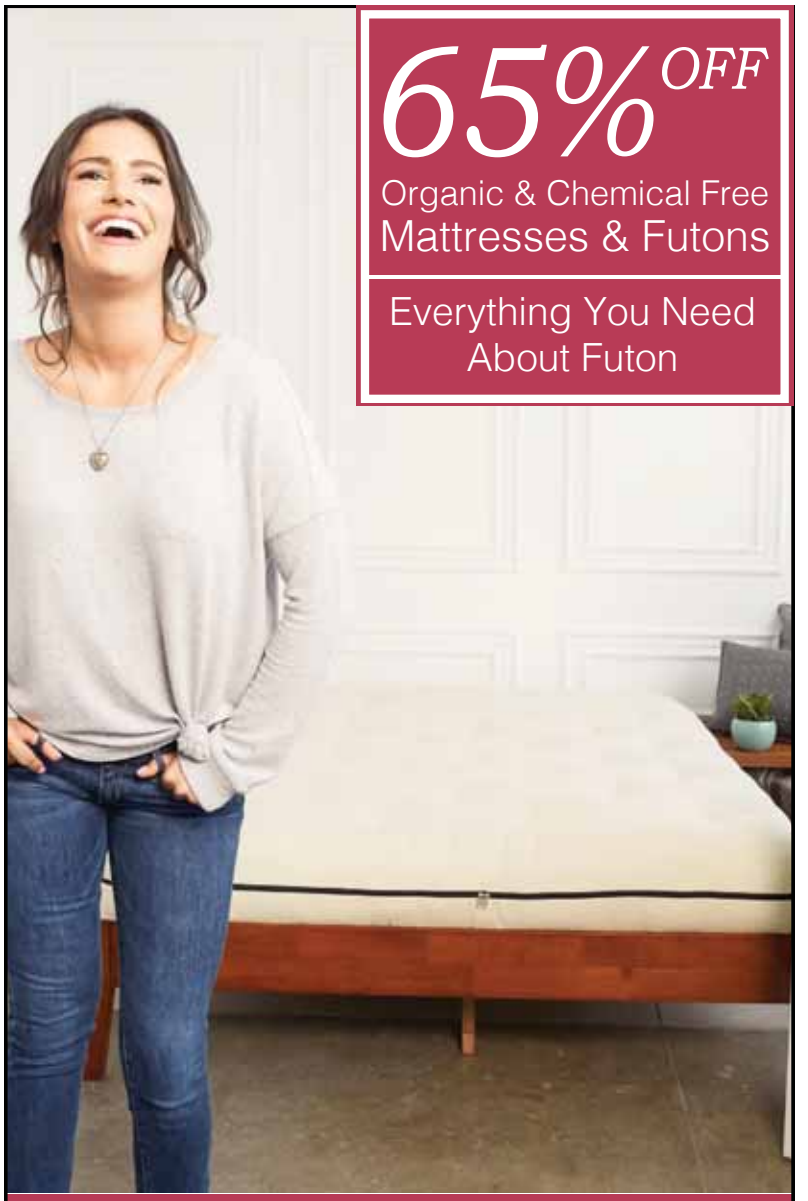

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How Weird street faire

Photo by Eric Pratt

Street Fair That Continues Improving and Blowing Our Minds

HOW WEIRD STREET FAIRE
howweird.org

The intersection of Howard and Second streets is pretty buttoned-down, what with all the things named for a giant tech corporation that rhymes with whale's-horse, but one Sunday a year things get a little peculiar. Held the first weekend in May — and thus fresh in our minds — the How Weird Street Faire is a precursor to the Burn and all the various summer festivals where people dress like fools. With a whopping 10 stages, it's getting harder and harder to just stand somewhere and watch the passing eye candy without a little DJ-related FOMO. Staged by the World Peace Through Technology foundation, it's the best reminder that yes, San Francisco is still San Francisco.

Historic Event That Almost Died But Didn't

CASTRO STREET FAIR
castrostreetfair.org

Wouldn't it be embarrassing if something that Harvey Milk started 45 years ago had to disappear, even as we're renaming airport terminals for the slain supervisor? At the very tail end of summer, on the same weekend as Hardly Strictly Bluegrass, the Castro Street Fair is a grand way to bid adieu to warm weather for the season, a street party that might not be as raunchy as Folsom but which still draws thousands of revelers. Inclement weather and economic woes in 2016 nearly led to its cancellation in 2017, but the Arts Commission and the Mayor's Office of Workforce and Economic Development infused its governing nonprofit with enough cash to see things through. And a smaller footprint means you're that much closer to that Sister of Perpetual Indulgence's glittery hennin and that cute tipsy person clad in next to nothing who's been making eyes at you.

Best Use of Muscular Forearms

PUERTO RICAN JESUS' PAPER TOWELS

As much as we love dyeing eggs and eating hams, the best thing about Easter is the Hunky Jesus and Foxy Mary contests in Golden Gate — formerly Dolores — Park. This year, dozens of would-be Messiahs competed to out-resurrect one another, including an aggressively fratty Drunk Jesus and a Gun Control Jesus with a crown of thorns who urged people to "Shoot Cum, Not Guns." But the real scene-stealer was Puerto Rican Jesus, a handsome Lamb of God in a Puerto Rican flag cape who chose to stick it to America's leaders by lobbing rolls of paper towels into the adoring crowds as though they were fishes and loaves. Clever trolling in the face of the ongoing tragedy of Hurricane Maria? Definitely. But everyone present voted for him by acclamation, and we went to heaven.

Best Proposal for a New Park

RUSSIAN HILL OPEN SPACE / FRANCISCO PARK

Neighbors have been waging a low-intensity conflict for decades over 4.5-acre parcel bounded by Bay, Hyde, and Larkin streets for decades, making sure no high-rise development will ever mar their views. But three years after the SF Public Utilities Commission ceded the former reservoir to Rec and Park, we have a plan to create a new public greenspace a little less than one-third the size of Dolores Park. Having raisedthe necessary $25 million, the Francisco Park Conservancy will transform a sad plot of turf into a "multi-use main lawn" with a dog park, community garden, children's playground and other amenities, all planted with native species. The timetable is pretty loose, but at some point, you and everyone you know will be taking selfies among the shrubbery in what is undoubtedly the largest property east of Van Ness available for such an eco-friendly conversion.

Best Hiking Trail With a View

THE COASTAL TRAIL AT LANDS END

It's fairly simple to get to the northwesternmost point in San Francisco by bike, easy to find parking if you drive, and it's one of the only mostly-flat hiking trails in the city. The Coastal Trail at Lands End tends to fill up on weekends with tourists, but on a sunny summer weekday evening it's mostly locals walking their dogs — amid a subline natural landscape. The out-and-back trail is sandwiched between golf courses and the ocean, with a picture-perfect view of Golden Gate Bridge. Bring a picnic or a thermos of tea and hang out for a bit on this quiet edge of San Francisco.

Best Ex-Giant Who's a Giant Again

PABLO SANDOVAL

Heavy hitter Pablo "Kung Fu Panda" Sandoval homered his way to three World Series titles with the Giants from 2010-14, creating cult-fan fads like panda hats and "Let Panda Eat" T-shirts. But the Panda hats went extinct at AT&T Park when Sandoval left town for a $95 million offer with the Red Sox. Sandoval was an unequivocal disaster in Boston, and the Sox quickly cut him last season, yet his return as a Giants pinch hitter has an unexpected delight. He even made a shocking appearance as a pitcher last month, throwing a perfect inning against the reviled Dodgers.

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Jessica Christian/S.F. Examiner

Best Alternative to Twin Peaks

GRANDVIEW PARK

Moraga Street and 14th Avenue Winded and appreciative of the ocean view they just earned, most people call it a day atop the 16th Avenue Tiled Steps. But climb a few more tough flights of stairs and you reap a stunning 360-degree view of the Bay Area from a perch that tourist-avoiding locals can comfortably enjoy after a trying journey. The view includes Twin Peaks, where there are sure to be swarms of visitors, cars, and the strong potential for violent thefts. Visit the world-famous spot all you want — it means missing out on the hidden gem that is Grandview Park.

Best New Mosaic-Tiled Stairs

ATHENS AVALON GREENSPACE TILED STEPS IN THE EXCELSIOR

You've likely seen the Inner Sunset's 16th Avenue Tiled Steps and the hidden Coit Tower step artwork, but there's a brand new addition to San Francisco secret art network that deserves a daylight trip. The Excelsior's Athens Avalon Greenspace Tiled Steps are a community eyesore turned into a squee public art installation that's been nine years in the making and which finally opened last fall. Tucked away at a once-decrepit stairway between obscure streets Avalon Avenue and Valmar Terrace, these 99 newly tiled steps by designer Iran Narges create a litany of colorful optical illusions alongside a fabulous garden park with 350 species of freshly planted succulents.

Best Postage Stamp

THE HARVEY MILK STAMP

That incredibly rare occasion when you still send snail mail can be properly gay-ed up with the addition of a Harvey Milk postage stamp, the U.S. Postal Service's overdue homage to America's first-ever openly gay elected official. This also makes Milk the first openly gay person to be depicted on a postage stamp period, and the USPS website and plenty of San Francisco post offices still sell sheets of these stamps honoring our slain supervisor. The stamps were issued four years ago, but they're still sold as "Forever stamps," meaning you can use them to fuck with your conservative relatives no matter how much postage costs increase.

Best New Way to Get Around Town

ELECTRIC FORD GOBIKES

In the past year San Francisco's streets have been hit with Ford GoBikes, JUMP Bikes, Lime Bikes and Bird, Spin, and Lime-S scooters. Each has come with their own controversies one neighborhood has banned bikeshare altogether but much of the antagonism comes from people who've never climbed aboard the new electric Ford GoBikes. The seats are comfy, the tires big enough to glide over the worst potholes, and wow do they fly. Getting up Page Street to the Lower Haight is a breeze, and much faster than any Muni bus. We like JUMP too, but to be honest, the sleek black electric GoBikes go with more of our outfits than Flaming Cheeto red.

Best Impromptu Spot to Watch Skateboarders

THIRD AND ARMY SKATE SPOT

Third Cesar Chavez streets (Park can be found at end of Indiana St.) With an abundance of ledges, rails, stairs, and gaps, this concrete stretch along the Islais Creek Channel in Dogpatch has served as a mecca for Bay Area skaters since the early 2000s. The name for this legendary spot for skaters is a bit misleading, since it's actually located between Third and Cesar Chavez streets, but those familiar with skateboarding will immediately recognize the waterfront park from skate videos and competitions that have taken place over the years. All levels are welcome, but if you're just into spectating, you're sure to find talented skaters showing off impressive tricks at this spot.

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